

HST 201: History of United States F17

(Escobar Meta 20887 23004)

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The Great Awakening
by Joe Escobar - Friday, October 13, 2017, 7:10 PM

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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which side of the issue, YES or NO, you have chosen to support or write about. Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Great Awakening

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Effects of the Great Awakening on the Revolution
by Hunter Coy - Sunday, October 15, 2017, 1:39 PM

So, after completing the readings I have concluded that the American Revolution was influenced by the Great Awakening, and these are the reasons why I think so. The Great Awakening brought about ideological rebellion against traditional power and institutional structure within the context of the Church (and to an extent society itself) as evidenced by sermons focusing more on the individual, their own individual takes on right and wrong, and the sermons telling the individuals to decide for themselves about what/who is pious, who is not, what leaders to listen to, which ones to not. This, as evidenced in our textbook coupled with a slew of now very prestigious universities that were founded by these evangelical groups

with these individualistic views after the Awakening but **before** the Revolution certainly, in my opinion, influenced American institutional thought by tinging the intelligentsia in the colonies with this individualistic ideology. Plus, it was inherent in these evangelical groups to rebel against their Anglican cousins, and in my opinion, I could see how this could manifest as an anti- English sentiment.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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We are one

by Casandra Fountain - Sunday, October 15, 2017, 8:04 PM

I'm siding with the fact the Great Awakening had an impact on the American Revolution. I believe it was a kick start for the Americans to realize their worth and independence from Britain. The revival leaders brought individualism to the American way of thinking. Bonomi notes the revival had unsettled the lives of more Americans and disrupted more institutions than any other single event in colonial experience to that time. The revivalists urged their followers to make personal decisions for God, regardless of the outcome on the larger society Bonomi also wrote. The Great Awakening proposed the notion that there wasn't a single answer to everything. You didn't have to have God's will interpreted from church officials but the people could hear His will directly. The Awakening was something everyone could respond to, no matter the age, sex, social status, or ethnicity. It brought colonists together and finally put them on the same page of seeing things.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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The Arguments

by Casandra Fountain - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 3:47 PM

When I read the two articles did have a hard time understanding Bonomi side only because of her writing style. Butler was definitely easier to comprehend, but I still couldn't side with him. The Great Awakening had to mean something to our history and getting us from point A to point B.

One argument is that time was a questionable factor. There was too long of a span between the Great Awakening and the Revolutionary War. Yes, there was time but sometimes time is what it take to permeate a movement such as the separation from Britain. The War That Made America was approximately two decades, one decade if counting from the ending, from the start of the Revolutionary War. And surely we can't argue that the French and Indian War didn't contribute to separation ideals.

Another argument is it only happened in half the colonies. Butler states "They [revivals] occurred in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia... New Hampshire, Maryland, and Georgia witness few revivals in the same years, and revivals were only occasionally important in New York, Delaware, North Carolina, and South Carolina." (p.7) Did he just name off every colony? He is telling us that the revivals made it everywhere, some were bigger in numbers than others but the point is that it swept down the coast. Of course there were places where more influence was held and the rivals had more of an impact (mid-atlantic colonies), but if you think about it that's where most of the founding fathers were from. The Great Awakening was happening in some of their teenage years and influencing them as they're becoming young ambitious leaders.

I have no doubt there were several other things that contributed to our separation from Britain, but I cannot say the Awakening didn't contribute either. We would be doing a disservice to our ancestors, if you will, if we shun off the fact they started a movement to get people thinking they are individuals. Revivalism taught people that they could be bold when confronting religious authority. (Significance of the First Great Awakening, website) This was the first step towards revolution.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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Religion and its lasting effect on the pre-Revolution colonies

by Lorenzo Arreola - Monday, October 16, 2017, 1:54 PM

After reading the paper presented on the two sides of the argument on the influence of the Great awakening on the lives of the American colonists and the lead up to revolution I have come to find that i follow the side of the argument against such a belief due to Professor Jon Butler and his view on how the revivals had little time and influence on the colonies and could not have the lasting power to help shape the revolution outside of some minor camaraderie. Mr. Butler writes in his argument that the revolution had little influence from any religious association that which the churches related to the Awakening, through this he argues that even the main church led by Andrew Croswell had closed down in boston by 1770, six years before any significant movement for the revolution to have been influenced by. I believe that this is a very important fact because it really does demonstrate the lasting influence of the Great Awakening if it couldn't even really last past 1770, not to say that the Awakening did not shape the way religion was used after it occurred but that the main philosophy of the movement had been lost long before it could really be seen in shaping the mindset of colonists and leading them down a path of anger and dissent towards the british regime.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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Re: Religion and its lasting effect on the pre-Revolution colonies

by Nathaniel McKinney - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 7:08 PM

I am personally on the opposite side, that is the Great Awakening had an impact on the American Revolution. You touched on the idea at the end of your post that leads me to believe that it had an impact on the Revolutionary war. That is the Great Awakening changed the colonist mind set to where they lead onto the idea that they don't need any British help. But I don't believe that the religious views is what lead to the war. Something that shows the change of mindset of individualism is show in the French and Indian War with the Albany plan. The plan was brought up about decade later failing to pass showing a change for the colonies not wanting to be apart of British.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0



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Great Awakening had little influence in the American Revolution

by David Garvin - Monday, October 16, 2017, 3:04 PM

The Great Awakening had very little influence in the events that led up to the American Revolution. The great awakening was a series of events that happened in multiple colonies at different times. The movements hardly generated widespread unity of the same religion and ideas. Jon Butler states, "They arose erratically in different times and places across a century from the 1690's down to the time of the Revolution." (Pg. 10) These events spanned over half a century and the colonies also saw a huge jump in population. Jon also states that colonial population went "... from fewer than three hundred thousand in 1700 to over two million in 1770..." (Pg 8) Most of these people that came to America settled in new communities that didn't have an established religious institution. Jon also brings up how the leadership "...was local and, at best, regional..." (Pg 10) While the great Awakening may have had some influence in the American Revolution for hopes of more religious freedom, it did not mark a major impact in kick starting the American Revolution.

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The Great Awakening

by Hee Jin Seo - Monday, October 16, 2017, 7:58 PM

Overall I agree with Jon Butler that the Great Awakening did not have a greatly significant effect on the American Revolution. I think the fact that only half of the colonies experienced a large amount of significant revivals is an important one (paragraph 5 of Butler's essay). If the Revolution had such close ties to the Great Awakening, then what prompted rebellion in the colonies that did not have significant revivals? Another point that Butler makes is that the timelines for large revivals were different in each colony. Since there were so many areas, all in different stages of religious revival at any one time, it would seem that there were other much more significant issues the colonists faced that led them to support rebellion.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by John Steil - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 8:23 PM

Hee Jin Seo, Great point. The fact that only about half of the people receiving revival messages does make it a weak point that the revolution was based on The Great Awakening.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

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The Great Awakening was Vital in Defining American Ideals

by Nicholas LaMonica - Monday, October 16, 2017, 8:31 PM

Between the two experts, I side more with Bonomi's argument. The Great Awakening caused colonists to reflect on and stress the importance of the individual for the first time, and this sense of introspection is the same reason the colonists thought to seek political freedom from England during the late eighteenth century. Bonomi states, "As the Great Awakening broke

down social cohesion in America, it simultaneously elevated the individual. During the more communal seventeenth century, colonists had rarely conceived of themselves apart from a larger collectivity- the family, the congregation, or the town” (Handout 4). The idea that faith could be viewed as a subjective experience for the individual caused permanent changes in the way colonists perceived individual freedom. I believe that this paradigm shift was a catalyst in giving the colonists an identity.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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Re: The Great Awakening was Vital in Defining American Ideals

by Lindsay Schnell - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 11:41 PM

I do also have to agree with what you are saying and what Bonomis' argument has to say and after re-reading both arguments weather or not the "Great Awakening" was key to the American Revolution and listening to the video file and the new reading. i am siding with what Bonomi has to say. Although it was a little hard to understand and Butlers argument was more understanding. the reason i am picking to side with Bonomi is because i feel like that the "Great Awakening" did have a key in the American revolution. I do realize it did happen years before the American Revolution. Bonomi stated "Since the Awakeners began as an insurgent minority in every church, they could advance their religious ideology only by overturning the orthodox majority" (p.3, handout). I feel like this was the first start to how different religions happened and that religion was a key factor in the American Revolution. we also learn that stated on Wikipedia that the "Evangelical preachers "sought to include every person in conversion, regardless of gender, race, and status". we also learn in audio file "the children of the revivalism later echoed this radicalism and popular self-righteousness in American Revolution. with all of this i still believe that the Great Awakening did have a key part in the American Revolution. I still ask myself how big of key factor did the Great Awakening have on the American Revolution? since in did happen 30 plus before hand.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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Re: The Great Awakening

by Garrett Warner - Monday, October 16, 2017, 8:41 PM

I agree with Jon Butler's argument that The Great Awakening was not a key factor to the American Revolution. The biggest point that stuck with me was that it has no true correlation to the revolution. Only in Virginia was there a break away from the Anglican ways of religious thought in politics before the revolution. I see the argument of comparing the revivals to the modern activists we see today. I agree with Butler that this stretch to compare the two isn't right, because of the insignificance they have with the actual revolution itself.

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1



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The Effects of the Great Awakening

by Benjamin Hawley-Gamer - Monday, October 16, 2017, 8:50 PM

I agree with Patricia U. Bonomi that the Great Awakening was a an almost “rehearsal” for the American Revolution that would happen nearly 32 years later. The points she brings up about religious unease about the growth of the colonies points to the Great Awakening having an influence on the decision to declare independence. As she states on page 3, “...their followers cut through the still powerful proscriptions against opposition to settled authority, and they did so not only in theory but in practice.” The colonists started to stand up and revolt against the established church and leadership, this would set the idea of questioning and rebelling against leadership in the minds of colonists until the 70s when they would rebel against Great Britain.

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Re: The Effects of the Great Awakening

by Lindsay Schnell - Wednesday, October 18, 2017, 9:09 PM

After reading both readings i do also agree with what Bonomi has to about the Great Awakening but i still am on the fence with what is really the true facts About the Great Awakening. As Bonomi also states That the "Religion has always been considered a likely agent of Radicalism. Nor is there reason to doubt that the tremendous stir of the Great Awakening altered the social and political equilibrium of colonial life" 9 (p.3). With this quote i state that the Great Awakening did have a factor leading up to the American Revolution. We also have to remember that the To sum up the question was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution? i see this quote as putting it straight for me "Episode known as the First Great Awakening coincided with the Pietistic movement in Europe and England and was carried forward by dynamic preachers such as Gilbert Tennant, Theodore Frelinghuysen, and George Whitefield". People we have not heard of yet. Who were these men i ask you?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Effects of the Great Awakening

by Benjamin Hawley-Gamer - Friday, October 20, 2017, 7:19 PM

I don't know if you meant to reply directly to my post, I also don't know if you were asking a serious question at the end. However I can tell you that George Whitefield was a very influential religious speaker in the Great Awakening. He was the one we discussed in class who would speak to thousands of people and would bring thousands of people to Boston who would come just to hear him speak. Tennent would Travel with Whitefield and helped him become popular in the middle colonies. Frelinghuysen was a religious figure in the Middle Colonies who wanted to Evangelize the Raritan Valley through reformed Pietism (according to Wiki).

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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The Great Awakening Affected the American Revolution

by Nathaniel McKinney - Monday, October 16, 2017, 9:00 PM

I agree with Patricia J. Bonomi position on the great awakening more than Jon Butlers position. Some of the reason why I agree more with Bonomi is from reading the other article, I thought some of the points the author was making seemed kind of ridiculous to me. As an example, "They occurred in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New Jersey (Para 2, pg 7)." In the article he claimed that it only affected very little of the colonies and compared it to something like campus distributions and urban riots of the 60's. To hear the author say it didn't affect much of the colonies but name half of them was odd to read and he talks about other colonies being affected from it but not as much as those colonies. After reading that early on made it difficult to trust the authors credibility. From the 1st article what stuck out to me the most was "The revival had unsettled the lives of more Americans and disrupted more institutions than any other single event in colonial experiences to that time (Pars 3 Pg 2)." I am not sure if this statement is correct but to claim something like this, makes me think of how influential these meetings were to the colonists. The meetings in a since was making the colonist think to more personal self and not of what others thought to help their own self make to heaven or whatever they believed in. Putting colonist into a mindset of own self gave them a different thought about Britain and how they don't help but only hinder us. Britain didn't want the colonists to do anything outside of benefiting themselves, but by changing their view on religion and social status made them recognize about how Britain is treating them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: The Great Awakening Affected the American Revolution

by Casandra Fountain - Friday, October 20, 2017, 3:28 PM

Nathaniel,

I think we're on the same page with our findings. I find Bonomi's quote very influential as you said. You also touched on the self thinking of the colonists and them making their own decisions. I had briefly went over this in my post and completely agree with you. We know that because of the Awakening there was several breakoffs from the bigger churches. People started to speak up for themselves and choose what type of preaching was right for them. The website explains that "the social effect of multitudes of new denominations was not, however, a fracturing of communities, but a unifying drive which helped to create a 'national consciousness'." (Significance of the Great Awakening) This unified people and after a couple of generations of colonists, their mindset toward the English monarch shifted. The website says just this, "After a generation or two passed with this kind of mindset, the Colonists came to realize that political power did not reside in the hands of the English monarch, but in their own will for self-governance (consider the wording of the Declaration of Independence)." (Basic concepts of the first Great Awakening) Barry Hankins states in the video clip, the Awakening had colonists viewing themselves as "separate people, as a people" separate from the Britain. (6:00) This movement may have not been up to the time we went to the war, but this certainly fueled the fire to separate from Great Britain.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: The Great Awakening Affected the American Revolution

by Jason Yeager - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 9:10 PM

I like that both you and Nathaniel brought up Butler's naming of the colonies affected by the revivals. While I sided with the Butler argument, this was one of a few examples of self-contradiction that really made me hesitant to agree with him. So much energy spent on trying to debunk the existence of a "Great Awakening" (I believe there was one) instead of trying to prove that the religious aspect of a developing national consciousness had little influence on American's desire to be free from British rule. I still believe that religion played a minor role, but I was frankly disappointed in the strength of Butler's argument to this point.

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Re: The Great Awakening Affected the American Revolution

by Casandra Fountain - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 9:54 PM

I agree with you. Both articles for me were hard to decide on but the additional material we got solidified the argument for me. I do think religion played a role because it was so prevalent in the society back then, but a minor role like you said. Though the Great Awakening was about a religious movement, I don't think that was the effect it had towards the revolution. I'm starting to sound like a broke record at this point but the Awakening opened people's eyes to individualism and wanting a change that would better THEIR way of life, not the empire's. The website states, "Children of revivalism later echoed this radicalism and popular self-righteousness in the American Revolution," (Significance of the Great Awakening) we even see this in our modern society where each generation wants better themselves. There were many other things that contributed to the revolution on a much greater scale, but we need to give credit to the revivalist men also.

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Re: After Thoughts From New Materials

by Nathaniel McKinney - Friday, October 20, 2017, 8:33 PM

After watching the video and reading the article, I still feel as though that the Great Awakening had an impact on the American Revolution. But I do think it wasn't so much about the religious part of the Great Awakening that had the impact but was the idea of thinking of themselves and bringing the colonies together to act as one(6:05 they talk about the idea of being separate as one). Around 5:15 in the video they talk about all classes and races of people came out to listen a person talk, showing that it this is bringing people to together to eventually lead to the revolution. In class we talked about Also, the video does conclude with the fact that George Whitefield and the Great Awakening was reaching out to many people and up to thousands of people at a time. With preaching up to 18,000 sermons in the colonies.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: The Great Awakening

by Micah Phillips - Monday, October 16, 2017, 9:20 PM

As Mr. Escobar would probably say that we should look at all the facts and all of the context of anything we read. What does it apply to then/now/or even the future. So I would like to leave the whole passage from this book of the Bible for everyone to look at and see how it applies to this situation.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Bel? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, " Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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what way is the truth

by Lindsay Schnell - Monday, October 16, 2017, 9:55 PM

After reading both readings about the great awakening and the section in the book about the Great Awakening, I'm torn between the two answers and explanations they give, both are very good as I had to look up some of the words they used. As both authors make great point, like Patricia Bonomi wrote, "Minority Rights and Divided Sovereignty: The Great Awakening As A Radical Model". I wasn't sure what she was trying to say but as I read on I got what she was saying by this quote "Since the Awakeners began as an insurgent minority in every church, they could advance their religious ideology only by overturning the orthodox majority" (p.3)

Now after reading what Jon Butler had stated in his letter, I was more confused on the question of the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution. When he states, "How do Historians describe "the Great Awakening"? three points seem especially common" (p.6). As I read on he continues to talk about Calvinism, "Yet, Calvinism never dominated the eighteenth-century religious revivals homogenized under the label "the Great Awakening" (p.6).

Following into the book reading about the Great Awakening it says, "This, "Great Awakening" shattered some denominational loyalties in the colonies and enabled the Methodists and the Baptists to surge ahead of all Protestant rivals after 1780" (p.131). They also continue to talk more about the Great Awakening and the controversy over the Religious Revivals. After reading all the material I feel like the "Great Awakening was a key to the war, but how big of key is it really and with all this information still out there that we will probably never find or will we. I also see that without this Great Awakening, women or religious people of all religions would not have some of the rights or ways or beliefs that we have if this was not a key in the American Revolution. How would America be without all this history going on.

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2

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Re: The Great Awakening - Revolutionary?



by Jason Yeager - Monday, October 16, 2017, 10:13 PM

Although we have been warned to not be fence-sitters on this issue, I have problems with both arguments. I guess I have to side with Butler, but hesitantly.

I can understand why Bonomi would suggest that religion as related to the Great Awakening was instrumental in bringing about the American Revolution. After all, religion permeated nearly every aspect of public and private life during this time period. So almost by default there had to be some religious influence, be it New Side or Old Side. Any discussion about secession from Britain would have been extreme, but most likely would have had some religious undertone. One of the hallmarks of the Awakening was the promotion of individualism, which could potentially lead to political discussions. As Bonomi states, "Religion has always been considered a likely agent of radicalism." (pg. 3, handout) So I guess I can see a progression from traditional religion, to the Awakening, to individualism, to radicalism, and ending with political upheaval. Unfortunately, Bonomi implies this, rather than drawing any direct link. So while I believe there was a connection with the American Revolution, I don't think that the Great Awakening was a "key" to it.

Butler's arguments have their own issues. Much of his essay is spent trying to debunk the idea that there was a Great Awakening at all. He admits that there were "revivals", but that they were isolated and relatively short in duration. But he also states that "the revivals of the 1740s stimulated formation of over two hundred new congregations and several new denominations." (pg. 8, handout) I find it hard to believe that all of these new communities simply petered out after a few years. I also have a problem with his assertion that "the cohesion of leadership in the revivals" (pg. 7, handout) has been overstated, and that there was not enough communication or coordination during this time period to facilitate any kind of political upheaval. I tend to see religion as an invisible pendulum that swings in a particular direction at the whim of the masses, and not because of one or two or ten fire-and-brimstone type preachers. Word-of-mouth between parishioners, and communities, would have had a much larger effect than communication between the church brass.

While a bit off-topic, I believe the American Revolution was stimulated by the ever-present motivator of man--money. Or "revenue" in whatever form it takes. With passage of the Navigation Acts, the Molasses Act, the Sugar Act, the Currency Act, and many other forms of legislation by the British in order to ensure the wealth of the Crown, Americans would have naturally banded together--regardless of affiliation or denomination--to take back what was rightfully theirs. But maybe that's a discussion for another forum.

Although the Great Awakening may have played some part in the American Revolution, I don't believe that Bonomi's argument proves a connection, so I have to side with Butler's argument, which doesn't really have to.

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The Great Awakening and Economics

by Lloyd Higgins - Thursday, October 19, 2017, 12:49 PM

I agree that economics and capital had a much larger part to play in the separation and eventual dissolving of the union between the colonies and Great Britain. The sheer amount of taxes imposed on the colonies regarding rum, tobacco and tea are clear pieces of evidence that supports the theory that the great awakening had little to do with the American Revolution. Butler anticipates, rightly so, that religious diversity in the colonies separated many groups from uniting under a single fundamental banner of singular Christian values. Whether that would be Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Puritanism or the belief system of the Quakers. In this instance it was money that United the Founding fathers in their interest to secede from British rule. No taxation without representation convinced many they were fighting for their own rights, when in fact it could very well be to simply protect the wealth of the many tobacco and land owning statesmen of newly formed United States.

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Re: The Great Awakening and Economics

by Jason Yeager - Friday, October 20, 2017, 2:41 PM

Couldn't agree more Lloyd. After reading the article on the Great-Awakening website, I am convinced that the Great Awakening was a "unifying drive which helped to create a "national consciousness"" (Great-Awakening.com) which would have brought Americans together against the authoritarian rule of the Church of England. But were the Founding Fathers influenced by this wave of unity? The website does say that "John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war....." (Great-Awakening.com) But if religion was such a motivating factor and so important in American political leaders' decision making, then why did they see fit to provide for the separation of church and state in the First Amendment of the Constitution? As I mentioned in my previous post, religion permeated nearly all aspects of the lives of Americans during this time period, but I have to think that any religious influence would have been a minor consideration in the minds of political leaders as they were contemplating a separation from England. The negative impact of taxation, etc. on the economy of the colonies would have had to have been the number one motivator.

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Re: The Great Awakening and Economics

by Kate Weiss - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 9:50 PM

I agree that England's heavy taxes on the colonies played a pivotal role in our fight for independence, but I don't think the colonists would have been ready to revolt against England without the individualism that followed the Great Awakening. The revivals offered the colonists the choice of denominations to worship at, preachers to listen to, and the ability to internalize and interpret God's will for themselves. The website pointed out that since the colonists were capable of speaking with God, without the monarch or bishop's interpretation, then "the chain of authority no longer ran from God to ruler to people, but from God to people to ruler" (paragraph 4). Another bonus to the Great Awakening was the spread of knowledge in the addition of many new religious universities, at a time when North America only had three. Even though these were religious schools, "few students chose a ministerial career" (text 137),

which means many other young students benefited from the Great Awakening new colleges. The textbook also mentions how men slowly became harder to convert after the enthusiasm following Whitefield's tour died down, and many opted to join a Freemasons group instead leaving women with a 3 to 1 majority in the churches (pg 134 paragraph 3). I think the point I'm trying to make is that the revivals created a different religious and intellectual avenues for the colonists, and showed them the success of breaking from a larger institution.

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The Great Awakening and the American Revolution

by Macy Biggs - Monday, October 16, 2017, 10:50 PM

The Great Awakening, was indeed, a major factor that contributed to the American Revolution. According to Patricia U. Bonomi, it was, "one of the most arresting subjects of American history." (p.2) The Great Awakening was a religious revival that boomed in the American colonies just before the American Revolution. This altered the way people thought about themselves as well as societal and political changes occurring during this time. This began with people such as the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield. At the time print media was just beginning to become popular which helped to inform the public as to what was happening throughout the colonies. Due to this it helped to get America prepared for its War of Independence. The colonists began to realize their religious views were in their control rather than in the power of the churches. As Bonomi states in her paper she believes that there were two main thoughts that shaped the religious beliefs in the eighteenth century, enlightenment rationalism and continental pietism.

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Religious Influence

by Jack Westphal - Monday, October 16, 2017, 10:59 PM

I most agree with the essay written by Jon Butler. While explaining how Connecticut New Lights and Pennsylvania Presbyterians played important roles in the colonial protests, Butler explains that "the British probably angered laymen of both groups because the latter were important politicians rather than because they were New Lights and Presbyterians. Or, put another way, they were political leaders who happened to be New Lights and Presbyterians rather than Presbyterians and New Lights who happened to be politicians" (Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution? page 9), promoting the idea that the Great Awakening wasn't a key to the Revolution, as it wasn't people who would label themselves first as 'religiously influenced', but 'politically determined'. I believe this is an important distinction to make because it highlights the political motivation for the colonies of the separation of church and state; although religion was not only a major influence in people's day to day life, but to the economy and politics, the influence of the Great Awakening doesn't extend into the American Revolution, as the promotion of religion wasn't a driving force behind independence.

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Re: Religious Influence

by Nicholas LaMonica - Tuesday, October 17, 2017, 9:01 PM

I previously sided with Bonomi, but the quote you used definitely clarifies Butler's argument for me. I agree in that the driving force behind the revolutionary war wasn't led by religious leaders but political leaders for political reasons, and that there is a distinction between church and politics. While the revolution wasn't mainly fought to escape religious persecution as much as it was to escape unfair taxation, I think it was more of an abstract change of thinking that transcended into politics. The mindset of elevating the individual's importance is the main thing I take from the Great Awakening in speaking on its influence on our revolution.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1



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The Puritans and the Great Awakening.

by Lloyd Higgins - Wednesday, October 18, 2017, 10:32 PM

While many may see the great awakening as a large social movement during the mid 18th century that eventually spurred on the American Revolution, I disagree that it had as much of an impact on the revolution as puritanism and economic reasons did. There were many colonies affected by the awakening, far and wide individual cities were taken hold, however many churches did not readily accept the revivals. Furthermore, only a few of the mainland colonies were affected by this large social change, such as Delaware, New York, North and South Carolina. On page 6, Butler also explains how the leadership of many of the churches were fractured and not necessarily commonly united as many other historians believe. This could be due in part to the amount of religious diversity in colonial christianity at this time. Only a century prior, puritanism was a fad that was sweeping the nation, and the tenets as well as mindset had a profound affect on the founding of our country, as our professor explained in this Tuesdays lecture about the declaration of independence and the assumption that many people in government could, or would become, immoral.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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After Watching The Video

by Nicholas LaMonica - Thursday, October 19, 2017, 4:04 PM

The historians from the video all speak emphatically while giving examples of George Whitefield's influence on colonial America during the Great Awakening, a religious revival which is called by one professor in the seven minute video: "the first national event in American history". The video describes George Whitefield's preaching journey that went from Maine to South Carolina in depth; Whitefield is described to be the first colonial 'celebrity', and drew in crowds for his sermons that sometimes reached thirty thousand listeners. Peter Marshall, author and lecturer describes his impact on day to day citizens: "He preached over 18,000 sermons on American soil from Maine to Georgia. Every living America, I dare say, knew who this man was, and many of them, there were only three million Americans back then... had heard him preach" (4:30).

The video foreshadows the Great Awakening's effect on the Revolutionary War, but does not describe it in detail more than colonists being on the 'same page' for the first time. The rippling effect of people starting to stray away from orthodox religious practice in favor of a more

personal conversion experience sparked a social upheaval in colonial America, and the historians argue that Whitefield (and others like him) influenced the colonists to band together in the face of older, dated institutions.

Something funny I noticed is that the textbook and the video both reference that “[Whitefield] could seduce a crowd just by the way he pronounced “Mesopotamia” (Life Liberty Equality, 133).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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YES - Great Awakening was key to the Revolution

by Kate Weiss - Thursday, October 19, 2017, 5:37 PM

I agree with historian Patricia Bonomi's position that the Great Awakening altered the social and political balance of colonial life, significantly changed the views of religion and individualism, and paved the way for the American Revolution. Bonomi argued that “as the Great Awakening broke down social cohesion in America, it simultaneously elevated the individual” (article pg 4 paragraph 3), which gave rise to a new way of thinking. Jonathan Edwards, arguably America's most important theologian and one of America's first intellectuals, explained that a revival was an emotional response to God's word that brought on sudden conversions to massive groups of people at once (text 132 paragraph 2). George Whitefield, an Oxford-educated Anglican minister, had the power to move thousands of people through a single sermon, and began to preach of the “new birth” conversion experience (text 133 paragraph 1). The Evangelicals split from dozens of congregations to form their own separate churches during the revivals. During this period, the number of women church members increased dramatically, which gave them the power in some cases to veto the choice of minister, or chose a different church with a minister they liked better. Men often chose to join the Freemasons solidarity group, which was like a “religion of manliness with mysterious rituals that extolled sobriety, industry, brotherhood, benevolence, and citizenship” (text 134 paragraph 3). This was the beginning of a movement that peaked during the American Revolution and lasted for a few decades after. Historian Richard Hofstadter indicated that the Great Awakening was “the first intellectual crisis of the mind and spirit in 18th-century America” (article pg 5 paragraph 4), which eroded the 17th-century unitary church ideals and prompted further separations. Colonists started making their own personal decisions and choices, something that was difficult, if not impossible, in Great Britain, and headed down a path of individualism which spawned into the American Revolution.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Great Awakening and Social Contract

by Hunter Coy - Thursday, October 19, 2017, 7:06 PM

With the addition of the two new sources, I feel more confirmed in my belief that the American Revolution was influenced by the Great Awakening, especially with evidence provided by the Great Awakening website. It would make sense that with American religious plurality and the frequency with which splinter groups started breaking away from the larger, more institutional

churches, that colonists would also apply this type of thinking to their governmental institutions as well. This, coupled with the idea that if the average person did not like their priest or religious leader during the Great Awakening, or saw them as unfit to preach or hold sermon, they were encouraged to speak out and try to move that religious leader off of the pulpit. Furthermore, the Great Awakening instituted the idea, that people did not need to turn to a religious institution for spiritual advice or Biblical interpretation. Once again this could carry over to the average Joe, thinking that they did not need to look to a king, or some kind of noble class for governance. All these considered, it seems more likely than ever that the American Revolution was influenced by the Great Awakening.

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Additional materials effects

by Casandra Fountain - Friday, October 20, 2017, 2:37 PM

After watching the video and reading through the Great Awakening website I feel there's truly no question the Great Awakening did indeed have an impact in starting the American Revolution. The video spends a great deal introducing the famous figures of the Awakening which most we should know by now, but the last 2 minutes or so the historians each make comments about the impact of it had. Karen Bullock goes to say "It's important to remember it was a cross denominational event." (5:05) This event took hold on men and women, whites and blacks, young and old, poor and rich. There was no boundaries.

The website was very informative. If you didn't read the other pages of it, you should. It gives information about the basic concepts along with the origins of the Great Awakening, the important people part of it, and the significance of it (which we all read). The website cites John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war. A founding father saying the Great Awakening was an important time in America's history is even more evidence. These two additional pieces of material only strengthen the argument that the Great Awakening was a catalyst to the American Revolution.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Religious Individualism

by Jack Westphal - Friday, October 20, 2017, 4:28 PM

At the very end of the First Great Awakening video, they leave you with the last line "Religion can be seen as a kind of backdrop of pre-cause to the American Revolution" (6:25-6:39) referencing the cultural movement that was created as the result of the First Great Awakening, including a broader sense of individualism and American independence. After watching this video, it's difficult to say that the Great Awakening didn't impact the American Revolution in some way, though how much is unclear. The book doesn't make much reference to the Great Awakening and it's impact on the American Revolution in Chapter 4, which tells me that the author views that it had minimal impact. I believe the textbook provides more accurate information than the video, however, I believe the video also discussed the relevancy of the rising individualism among colonial Americans and it's relation to the war for their independence from Britain.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Religious Individualism

by Nicholas LaMonica - Friday, October 20, 2017, 10:05 PM

I agree with you in that the textbook provides more accurate information than the video. It is informative and fun to watch but dramatic at points, and the musical cues along with the narrator's storytelling makes the subject feel a bit romanticized. The textbook version doesn't speak much on the Great Awakening's influence on the revolutionary war, but some of the more on smaller effects such as the creation of Freemasonry, the flourishing of new colleges (Dartmouth/Princeton/UPenn) and the soaring in number of women church members. The textbook stresses that "The revivals transformed American *religious* life." (pg. 137), but does not go out of its way to mention its effect on politics or our relationship with Britain, which makes me question how much influence the revivals really had on the revolutionary war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Watch the First Great Awakening Video

by Micah Phillips - Friday, October 20, 2017, 4:43 PM

I, before watching the video, would say I believe that the Great Awakening was the, "Pre-cause" of the American revolution. The historians in the video state this and talk about how the people would come to gather and basically cause an uprising. They would get a sense of American independence and over throw the preachers or leaders that they don't like. (The First Great Awakening Video min:5:50) I believe from this view of how the great awakening worked can show the type of thinking people had and could very well instigate an American Revolt. Independent and wanting to think free of the religious and social box the government has put its people in, I think we all would want that. And this think is what led to the American revolution.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Reflection on the Great Awakening video

by Lloyd Higgins - Friday, October 20, 2017, 9:05 PM

While at first, I was wholly convinced that many of the taxes imposed on the colonies and the economic strain that the British government put on America to bail out the East India Trading company, watching the video has most certainly put a new spin on the idea of a religious revolution before there was the political upheaval of the American Revolution. The Great Awakening inspired many devout Christians to begin to question their previously held beliefs in religious doctrine and rules regarding their way of life. This could have very easily lent itself to broadening the minds of the working class within the colonies to be more open to ideas of dissenting from the British crown and forming an independent country. It would be no coincidence then that the founding fathers could take advantage of this newly formed curiosity and fervor for change that the people of the soon to be United States were so interested in. Inspiring the people to fight and die for the ideals of a newly formed republic would have been no easy task, even with the military and political support of the French. Winning hearts and minds has always been the name of the game when inspiring people to fight a war, and during the latter years of the 18th century in America, this would have been no different. That said, I still strongly believe that economics had a larger part to

play than religious awakening, for the simple matter that those in charge saw their capital rapidly being taken away by an empire that seemingly invested it in other priorities rather than the welfare of 18th century America.

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Final Reflection

by Jack Westphal - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 3:05 PM

The website is making an argument for the results of the First Great Awakening and their impact on the American Revolution, including how "The chain of authority no longer ran from God to ruler to people, but from God to people to ruler" (Towards an American Identity, 3rd Paragraph), implying that the "religious zeal turned to revolution and sentiments of self-governance" (Religious Uniformity, 2nd Paragraph) in the American colonists. With all the information provided, from the textbook, website and the video, I think the informed position would be to say that the Great Awakening had an effect on the American people who would later help gain America's independence, so to say that it had no effect on the American Revolution would be ignorant. George Whitfield, among others, were seen as the "first American stars" (video 3:30-3:45) that brought the Great Awakening and it's principles across the colonies that would change the attitudes of the American people towards that of independence.

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The Great Awakening Website

by Hunter Coy - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 5:57 PM

I would say that the website supports the opinion that the Great Awakening influenced the American Revolution. The reasons I think this is as follows: Most of the section headers on the website itself seem to lean toward supporting the aforementioned opinion, with such headers as "Significance of the Awakening: Roots of Revolution", and "Towards an American Identity". Not to also mention the website contains rhetoric such as "It was through the revivalism of the first half of the Eighteenth Century that the colonists were finally able to step out from under the protectorate of the established Christian churches and assert religious control over their own nation's destiny." Which seems to imply, quite explicitly, what side the website supports.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Yes

by John Steil - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 6:54 PM

By popular belief, most Americans are committed to the idea that early colonists came to America for relief of religious persecution. The idea of the Great Awakening being a key to the American revolution is one that I happen to agree with. Religion can be considered a likely cause of radicalism. Clearly religion can lean toward a provincial way of thinking. Does religion cause radical behavior? With regard to the Great Awakening, I do believe religion was a likely agent of radicalism. The initial movement away from England was a radical one in and of itself. Once in a new found land, promotion of a spiritual rebirth was fostered. New freedom not only caused a change in religion, but politics and social issues as well. More population, land shortages (believe it or not) all contributed to radicalism, and pre-revolutionary thoughts.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Great Awakening and the Revolution, Final Thoughts

by Benjamin Hawley-Gamer - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 8:16 PM

After taking all the information from the last week into consideration, I very much believe that the Great Awakening was a definite lead into the American Revolution. The website brings a view of agreement with the “yes” statement from the original documents. Statements such as “Rather than believing that God’s will was necessarily interpreted by the monarch or his bishops, the colonists viewed themselves as more capable of performing the task (<http://www.great-awakening.com/roots-of-revolution/> paragraph 4).” This quote shows a mentality of questioning leadership of churches and established leadership, this mentality will carry on until the American Revolution. As well as statements made in the article, the actual title and sections of the article also hint at the view of the website. For example the title of the article is “Roots of Revolution,” this shows the connection between the revolution and The Great Awakening. Another section reads “Towards and American Identity” this shows the country moving towards being The United States.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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After Reading The Website

by Nicholas LaMonica - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 8:47 PM

Compared to the textbook which draws little to no lines connecting the Great Awakening and it’s influence on the Revolutionary War, the website reading is very bold in describing a relationship between the two events. According to the website, in certain parts of England the American revolution is referenced as the “Presbyterian Rebellion” due to the massive influence the Presbyterian revivals had on our decision to declare independence from Britain. The idea of ‘covenant’ in religious practice was influential in introducing to colonists the notion of a contract between the state and its citizens: “Parishioners during the revival gained an

understanding of covenants with their churches as contractual schemes; they argued that each believer owed the church their obedience, and the churches in turn owed their congregants the duty to be faithful to the Gospel. Parishioners therefore reserved the right to dissolve the covenant and to sever ties with the church without prior permission” (website). The colonists probably saw their relationship with England as similar to having an unfair contract, and felt moral in their right to declare independence or ‘sever ties’.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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The Great Awakening

by Hee Jin Seo - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 11:20 PM

The article “Significance of the Great Awakening” on great-awakening.com seems to support the idea that the Great Awakening was a significant factor in starting the Revolution. After reading this article I found myself agreeing with that idea. In the second paragraph of the article, it talks about the Awakening causing increased religious individualism in colonists. People were starting to view themselves capable of interpreting God’s will, without the need of an authority above them interpreting it for them. I think this also extended over to their political views. If the colonists could rule themselves religiously, why could they not rule themselves politically as well? Additionally, citizens started to view the government as an entity that should work for its people, rather than just rule over them. All of these factors point to the Great Awakening being a large factor in the start of the Revolution

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New sources

by Macy Biggs - Saturday, October 21, 2017, 11:23 PM

After going over the added material to the forum I still believe that the Great Awakening impacted the American Revolution. The website provided great detail on the origins of the Awakening and how it was a major point that sparked the American revolution. The idea that one could have their own religious beliefs outside of the church and still be able to find there spirituality was a revelation. People then started applying this thinking towards their political views. The video also talks about important famous people from this time period and how their views and ideas helped create this movement. I found the video to more enjoyable to learn from out of the two, it provided credible information while keeping its audience engaged and entertained. The new sources of information helped clarify more facts about the event and help me to understand in more depth the gravity of this.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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