

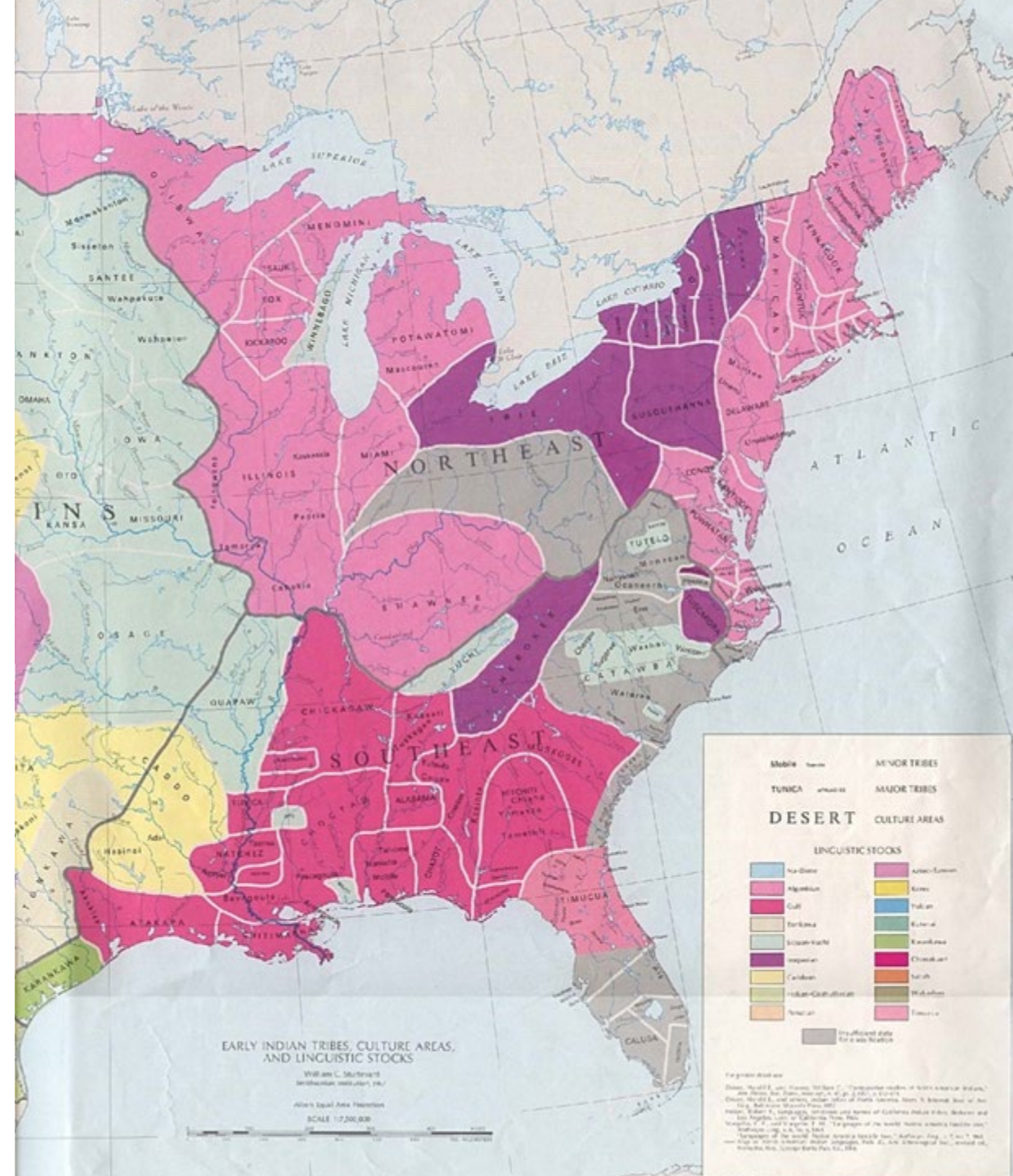


A Brief Background

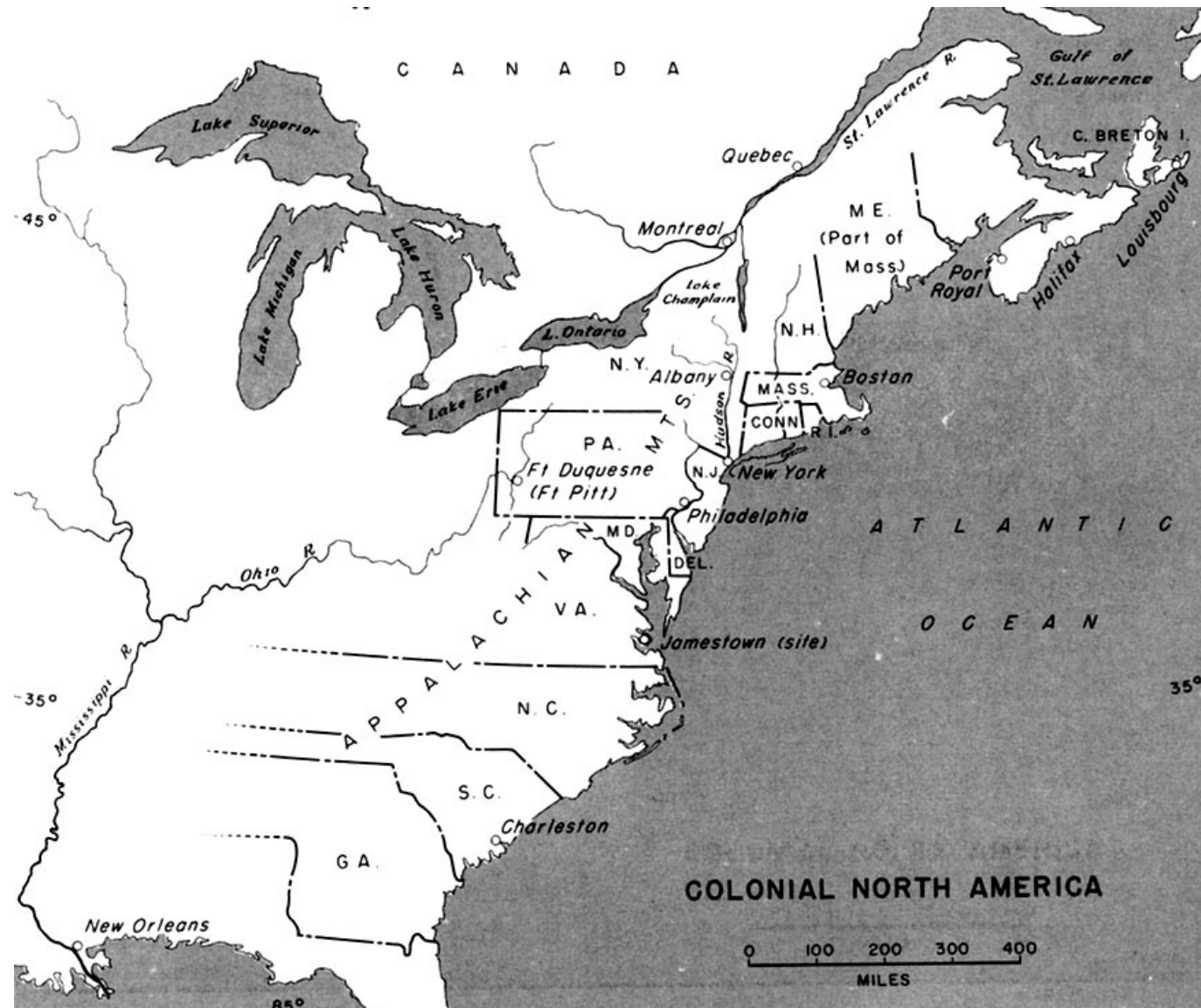
To US Independence and the Constitution of 1789

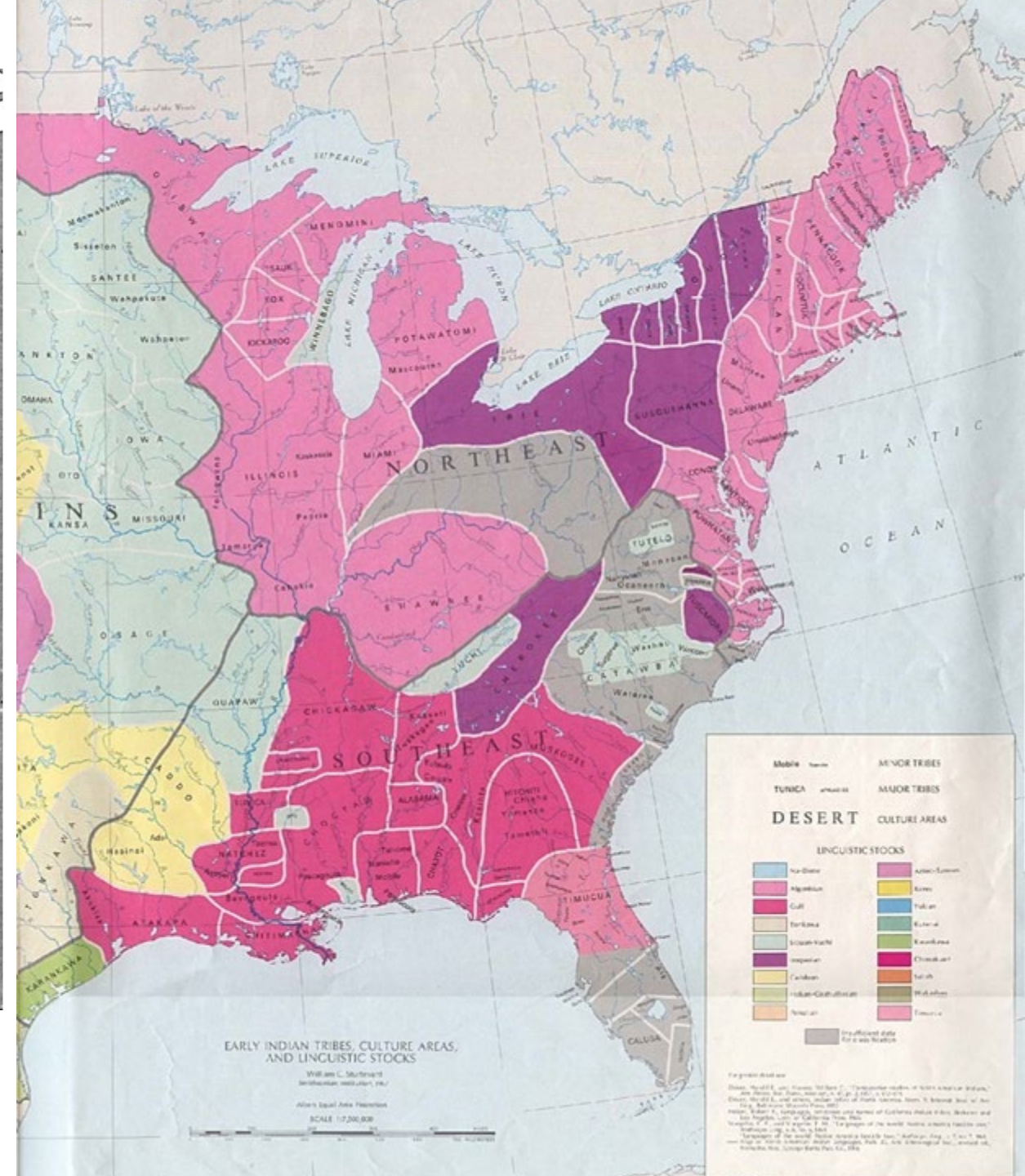
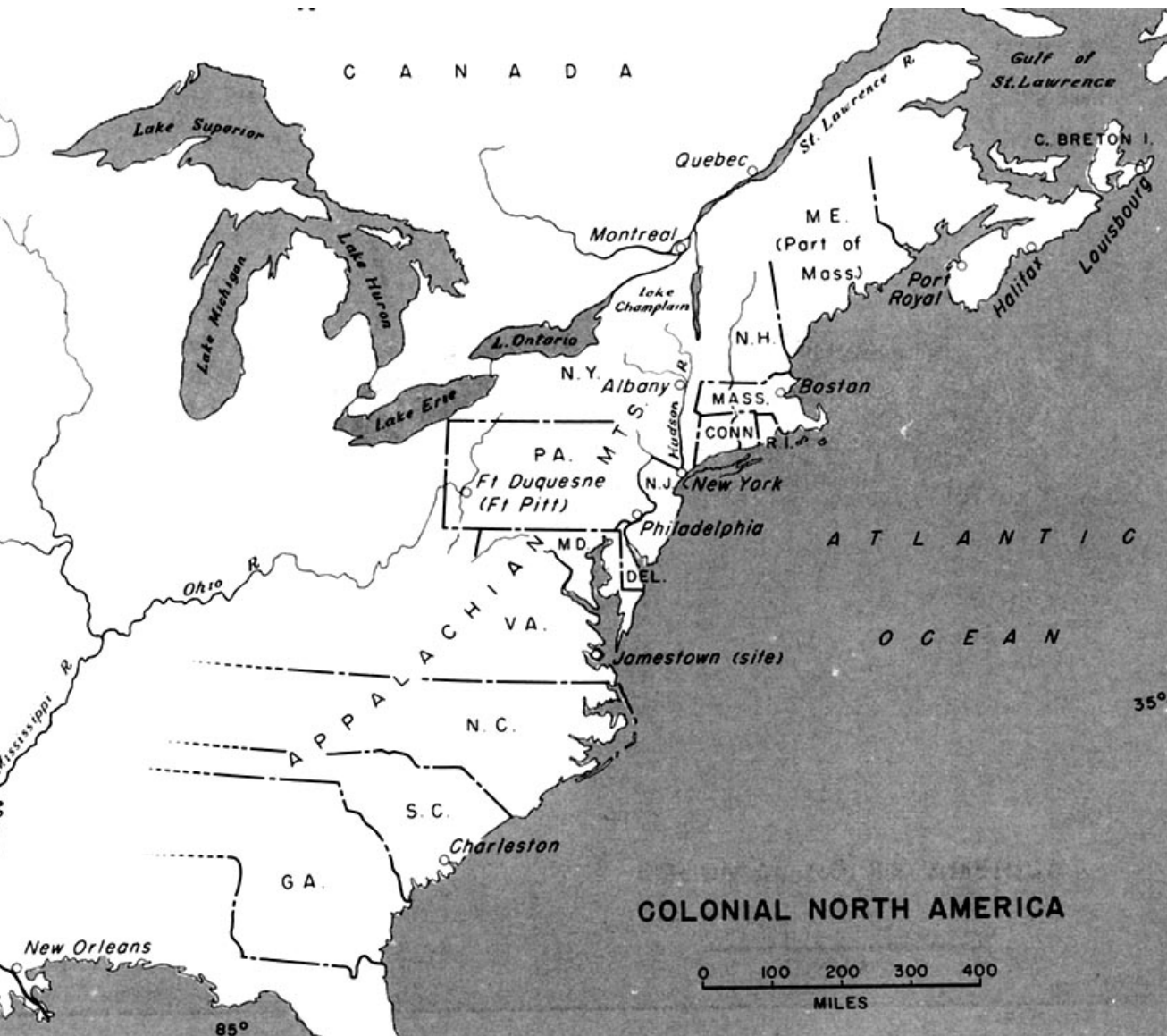
Overview

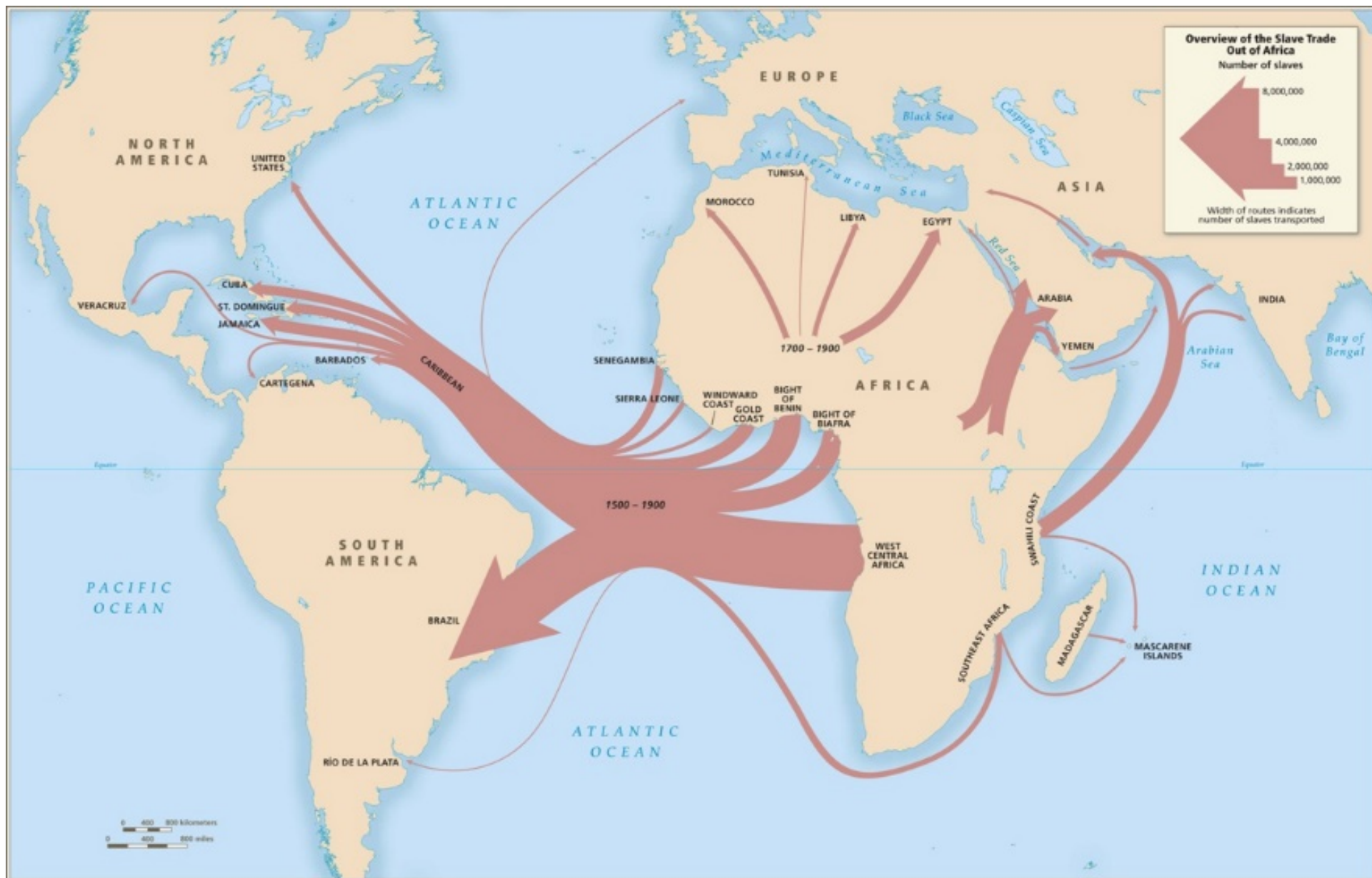
- Historical Context
 - Colonization of North America
 - Indigenous inhabitants
 - Slavery and slave trade
- British America:
 - Limits to Government
 - Significant Autonomy
- Increasing British Interference
- Declaration of Independence and War



The 13 Original Colonies



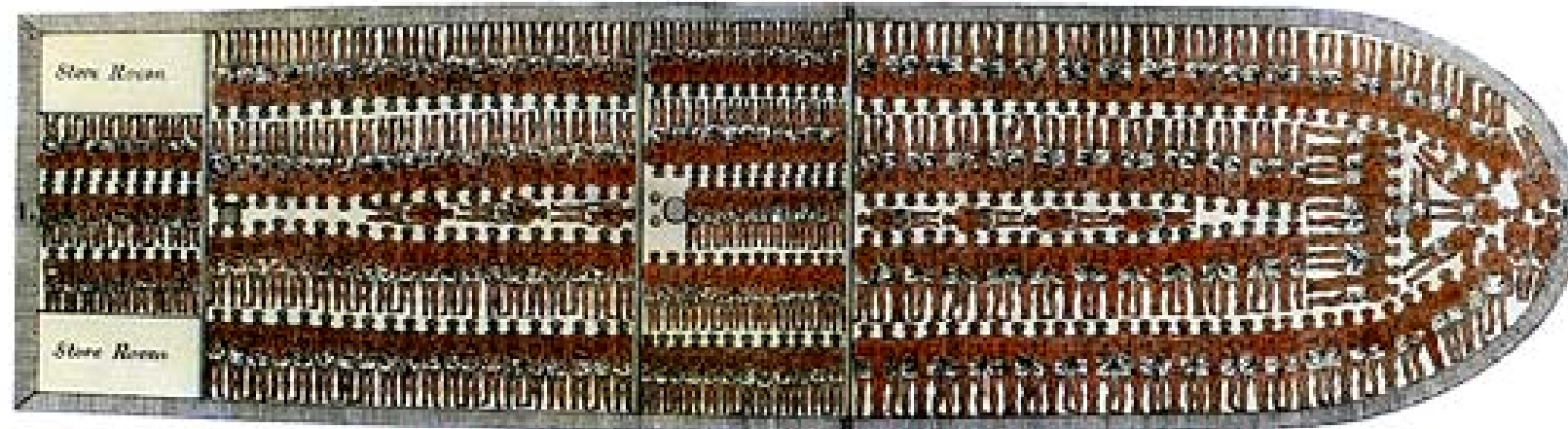






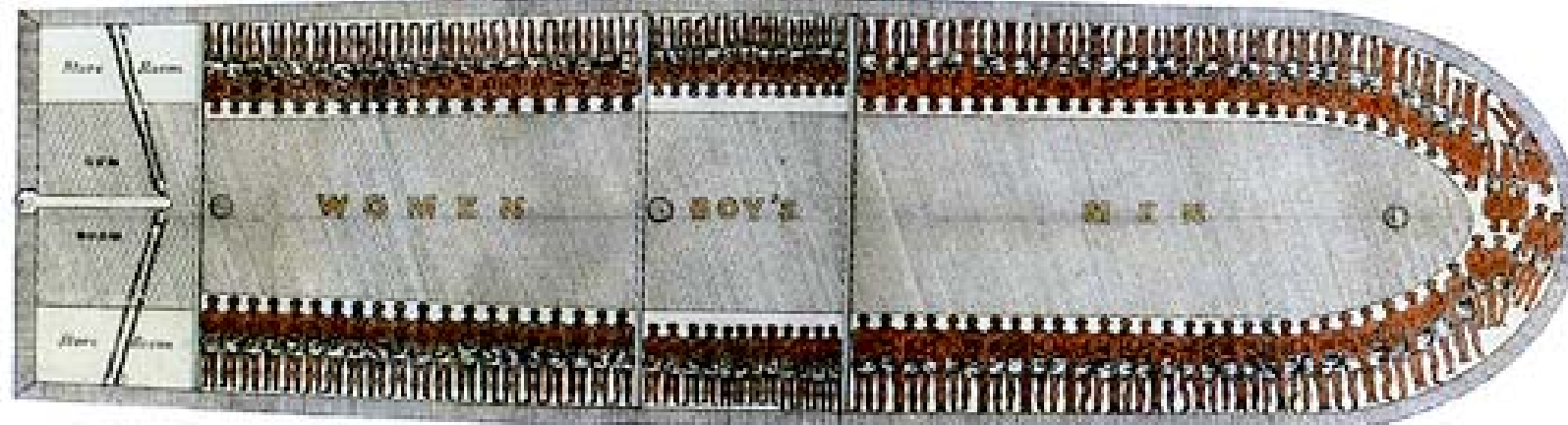
PLAN OF LOWER DECK WITH THE STOWAGE OF 292 SLAVES
130 OF THESE BEING STOWED UNDER THE SHELVES AS SHEWN IN FIGURE 2.

Fig 2



PLAN SHEWING THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES
(IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOWED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES
BETWEEN THE BEAMS AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. See Fig 1.

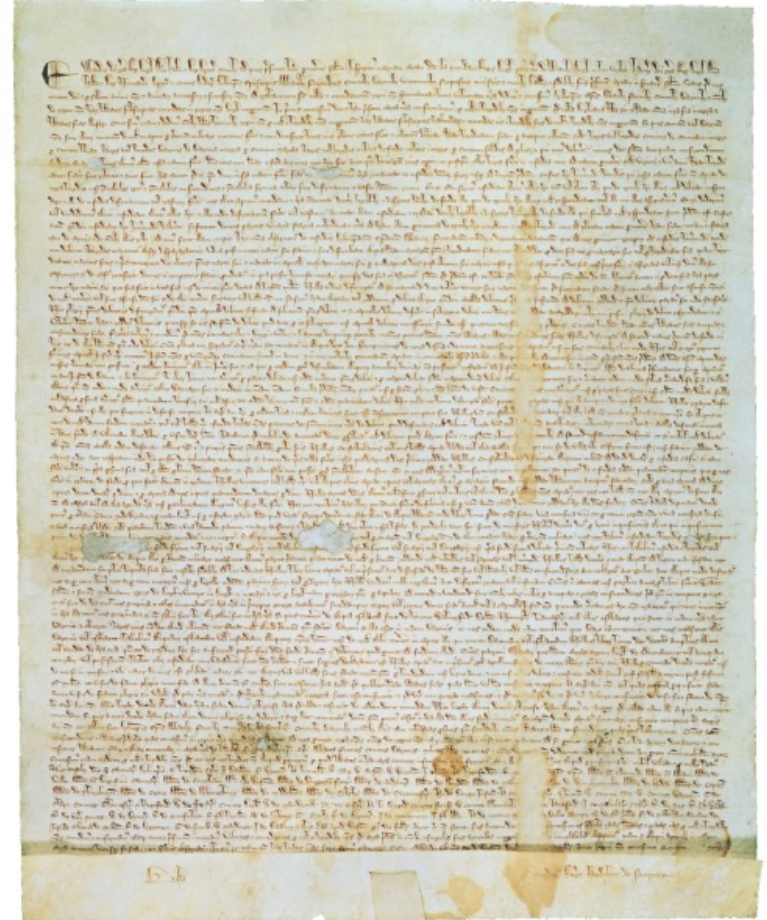
Fig 3



Political Philosophies and the Founding Fathers

Magna Carta, 1215

- Considered the foundation of limits to the king of England's power



Government

- Why does government exist?
 - Anarchy = the absence of government
 - Anarchy is often thought to be equivalent to “chaos,” but this is not necessarily the case
- Why do we have the government that we have?
- What type of government *should* there be?

Possible Answers?

- Founding Fathers knew about:
 - Social Contract theory (and a lot of other ideas)
 - In social contract theory, government is a creature of a social contract (a unanimous agreement) to exit state of nature (which = anarchy/no government)
 - Philosophers differed in their view of the Social Contract and government
 - Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) had a pessimistic view of life without government, otherwise known as anarchy
 - In anarchy, “life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”
 - What government *should* we have? A “strong man” who can impose order and security
 - John Locke (1632-1704)
 - In the “state of nature” (anarchy), people cannot safeguard their natural rights, so they enter into a contract for protection
 - What government *should* we have? A second contract exists between the government and the sovereign people



John Locke's Social Contract Theory

- John Locke emphasized natural rights of:
 - Life
 - Liberty
 - Property (which becomes “pursuit of happiness” in the Declaration of Independence)
- In anarchy, every one is completely free, but insecure: anyone could take one's life, liberty, or property
- There are two contracts:
 1. by the people to form a government to protect their natural rights
 2. between the people and government to protect a sovereign people
- Locke therefore promotes the ideas of:
 - Limited government
 - Government by consent of the people



More on Locke

- Locke wanted to justify the removal of a king in England by the Parliament (the legislature)
 - A popular view at the time was that monarchs ruled by divine right
 - Locke supported removing a despotic king (James II of England)
 - Parliament removed James II and invited another (actually, two, the married King William and Queen Mary) to take his place in 1689
- Locke also was involved in government and politics
 - He was asked to draft a constitution for the Carolinas (British colonies); that constitution “specifically provides that ‘Every Freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves’” (Welchman 1995, 72).
 - He argued that “slaves, who being captives taken in a just war, are by the right of nature subjected to the absolute dominion and arbitrary power of their masters” (Kendi 2016)
 - He invested in the slave trade (Welchman 1995, 73)

Some Events Leading Up to the Declaration of Independence

Some Events Leading to the Revolutionary War

- **The French and Indian War, 1754-63**
- Increasing taxes and enforcement by Britain
 - Sugar Act, 1764
 - Stamp Act, 1765
- Increasing punishment and reaction
 - Townshend Acts, 1767
 - Use of writs of assistance
 - Quartering Act, 1765 and 1774

Some Events Leading to the Revolutionary War

- Boston Massacre, 1770
- Boston Tea Party, 1773
- Coercive Acts (Intolerable Acts), 1774
- Summary of the Rights of British America, 1774
- First Continental Congress, 1774
- Battle of Lexington and Concord, 1775
- Second Continental Congress, 1775

The Declaration of Independence

Writing the Declaration of Independence

- John Adams explained to Jefferson why he should write the draft instead of Adams:
 - “Reason first – You are a Virginian, and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of this business. Reason second – I am obnoxious, suspected, and unpopular. You are very much otherwise. Reason third – You can write ten times better than I can”
- What Adams thought of the first draft:
 - “I was delighted with its high tone and the flights of oratory with which it abounded, especially that concerning negro slavery, which, though I knew his Southern brethren would never suffer to pass in Congress, I certainly never would oppose.”
 - Source: David Colbert, editor, *Eyewitness to America* (New York: Pantheon, 1997)



References to indigenous peoples

- The Declaration refers to “the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.”
- And yet, it was an open secret that many Europeans preferred living with the indigenous.
 - Ben Franklin wrote, “No European who has tasted Savage Life can afterward bear to live in our societies” (Bregman 2020, 109).
 - Hundreds of white Europeans fled to live with Native peoples (and Blacks fled slavery), while very few Indians chose to live with white.
 - In a prisoner exchange after a defeat in battle in 1763, most white captives had to be forced to leave the Ohio Indians, while the Indian captives “went back to their defeated relations with great signs of joy” (Loewen 1995, 102).
 - Women who were “captives” reported that they would rather remain with the Indians: “We could work as leisurely as we pleased” and “Here, I have no master...Is there a single woman as independent as I in your cities?” (Bregman 2020, 109).