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# **BUILDING BLOCKS OF AMERICAN LIBERTY**

# **We Are Building Blocks for Liberty**

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We are an all volunteer 501c3 Non-profit

Our mission is to provide education on the founding principles of these United States

We do this through:

Presentations like this

Hosting events with prominent speakers

Constitutional workshops for students

Constitution Boot Camps

# Why Are We Here?

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“For no People will tamely surrender their Liberties, nor can any be easily subdued, when Knowledge is diffused and Virtue is preserved. On the Contrary, when People are universally ignorant, and debauched in their Manners, they will sink under their own Weight without the Aid of foreign Invaders.” ~ Samuel Adams



# OUR LIBERTY

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- How many times have you heard that the United State's form of government is only a two century old **EXPERIMENT**?
- Do you know the ***Building Blocks*** of our **Liberties**?
- Are the **principles** found in our **Liberties** all new ideas?

# English History and the Founders

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- Before the “Lee Resolution” was adopted on **2 July 1776**, our Founders were all British Subjects and knew the development of Liberty through their common English History.
- Let us explore that history.

# What Did a Founder Say?

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- “... Guard with attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. ... When American spirit was in its youth, the language of America was different: **Liberty, sir was then the primary object.** ... Our glorious forefathers of Great-Britain, made liberty the foundation of everything. ... We drew the spirit of liberty from our British ancestors: by that spirit we have triumphed over every difficulty: ...” ~ Patrick Henry, Virginia Ratifying Convention 5 June 1788



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**So What Was He  
Talking About?**

**Let's Look at Six  
Critical Blocks**

# Background

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## Kings?

When the Vikings appeared in the British Isles at the **end of the eighth century**, England did not exist. Instead, the parts of the island that now fall within England's modern boundaries comprised a number of kingdoms of various sizes.

The most significant of them were Wessex in the south west, Mercia in the Midlands, Northumbria in the north of England (extending into southern Scotland) and East Anglia (covering the present-day counties of Norfolk and Suffolk).

These kingdoms had developed as a result of the social, political and economic changes brought about by the withdrawal of Roman authority at the beginning of the fifth century and substantial migration from northern Europe and Scandinavia. They are generally known to us as the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.



# Background

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Local communities or “**Shires**” were banding together seeking a leader to organize their defense. Their kings were essentially delegated powers related to **foreign affairs, e.g. war, peace and foreign negotiations**. Something that Madison wrote in “Federalist 45.”

“... The powers delegated by the proposed constitution to the federal government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the state governments are numerous and indefinite. **The former will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation, and foreign commerce;** with which last the power of taxation will for the most part be connected. The powers reserved to the several states will extend to all the objects, which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties and properties of the people; and the internal order, improvement and prosperity of the state. ...” ~ James Madison “Federalist 45”

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-10-02-0254>

# Background

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In looking back it seems that things began to really gel around the year **1066** with the Norman conquest of William the Conquer who was a tyrant and began stripping the Anglo Saxons of their lands and rights. He died in 1087 and is reported to have said, “I’ve persecuted the natives of England beyond all reason, wether gentle or simple.” His son **William II** learned well from his father and kicked it up a few notches.

William II was killed in a “hunting accident” in **1100** and was succeeded on the throne by his younger brother **Henry I**.

This is where things begin to form. The nobles were very suspicious of the circumstances around William II’s “accident” and began investigations into what actually happened. They hated William II, but didn’t want to be ruled by someone who killed or had his brother killed. Back then “impeachments” could be fatal.



# The First Block

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- In **1100 King Henry I** ascended to the throne of England and issued the "***Charter of Liberties***," subjecting the King to certain laws concerning Church officials, oppressive taxation and nobles.
- With this charter, granted by Henry when he ascended the throne, the king formally bound himself to these laws, setting the stage for the rule of law and constitutionalism.
- **“... I, through fear of God and the love which I have toward you all, in the first place make the holy church of God free,...” BOR 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment**



# The First Block

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- In the “Charter of Liberties” or “Coronation Charter.” In the charter Henry formally bound himself and future Monarchs to:  
“Make the Holy Church of God” free of government interference. **Note: this is separation of the State from the Church, NOT separation of Church and State!**
- So, our **First Amendment** guarantees of Religious Freedom are only a two century old **EXPERIMENT ?!**

# Background

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- In 1213 Archbishop Stephen Langton, in a dispute with King John, over interference in church matters, reminded the Nobles and the people that their rights had been guaranteed over a century earlier by "**The Kings Charter**" ("**Charter of Liberties**").

# Background

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- **Other factors:**
- Compounding discontent among the nobility were tax increases during Richard I's reign (1189–99), which resulted from his Crusade, his ransom, and his war with France. John was confronted with those myriad challenges upon his rise to the throne in 1199.
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- After the loss of Normandy in 1204, John was forced to rely on English resources alone, and the crown began to feel a new urgency in the matter of revenue collection. Royal demands for scutage (money paid in lieu of military service) became more frequent.



# The Second Block

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- The result of the dispute resulted in the "**Great Charter**", more commonly known as the "**Magna Carta**", (**MC**) which Bishop Langton and the barons forced John to sign.
  - **MC clause 14** establishes taxation only through a representative council. (**A1S7C1**)
  - **MC clauses 39 and 40** establish rights to "due process" and speedy trial by jury. (**BOR 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Amendments**)
- So **USC A1S7C1** and **BOR Articles V, VI and VII** are only a two century **EXPERIMENT!?**

# Background

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- In March **1625**, **Charles I** became king. When his first Parliament met in June, trouble immediately arose because of the general distrust of Buckingham, who had retained his ascendancy over the new king. The Spanish war was proving a failure and Charles offered Parliament no explanations of his foreign policy or its costs.

# Background

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- In **1627 King Charles I** sent the Duke of Buckingham to help the French Huguenots, an expensive and unpopular fiasco. Parliament opened impeachment hearings and Charles promptly dissolved Parliament. Lacking monies to fund his dictates, Charles assembled a new Parliament.
- The new Parliament forced Charles to make more concessions to Parliament in the 1628 "**Petition of Rights**" in order to obtain the taxes.



# The Third Block

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- Some of the liberties the “**Petition of Rights**” guaranteed the people are:
  - Taxes can be levied only by Parliament (**A1S7C1**)
  - Martial law may not be imposed in times of peace (**A1S9C2**)
  - Prisoners must be able to challenge their detention with a writ of Habeas corpus (**A1S9C2**)
  - Troops cannot be quartered without the consent of residents (**BOR 3<sup>rd</sup> A**)
  - **The USC and BOR are only a two century EXPERIMENT!?**

# Background

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- Largely through the incompetence of Buckingham, the country now became involved in a war with France as well as with Spain and, in desperate need of funds, the king imposed a **forced loan**, which his judges declared illegal. He dismissed the chief justice and ordered the arrest of more than 70 knights and gentlemen who refused to contribute.
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- The House of Commons at once passed resolutions condemning **arbitrary taxation** and **arbitrary** imprisonment and then set out its complaints in the **Petition of Right**, which sought recognition of four principles:
  - **No taxes without consent of Parliament; no imprisonment without cause; no quartering of soldiers on subjects; no martial law in peacetime.**
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# Background

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- Charles dissolved Parliament in 1629 and ruled for the next 11 years without a Parliament. He was impeached and executed on 30 January 1649.

## **The English Civil wars (1642-1651)**

In 1653, Oliver Cromwell was installed as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England.

After Cromwell's death in 1658 his son, Richard ruled for only 8 months. Tired of the bloodshed during the Cromwell era, **Parliament then installed Charles II as king in 1660.**

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# The Fourth & Fifth Blocks

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- "Triennial Act" of 1641 required that Parliament convene at least every three years (A1S4C2)
- "Grand Remonstrance" in 1641 demanded, among other things, the following:
  - Parliamentary control of Royal appointments and the army (A2S2C2)
  - Halt the diminishment of property rights (BOR 5<sup>th</sup> A)
  - Stop infiltration of foreign law and titles of nobility (A1S9C8)
  - End government intrusion into the church (BOR 1<sup>st</sup> A)
  - Arrest the king's debasement and control of money (A1S8C5)
  - Stop disarming citizens (BOR 2<sup>nd</sup> A)

# Background

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**The Glorious Revolution**, also called “The Revolution of 1688” and “The Bloodless Revolution,” took place from 1688 to 1689 in England. It involved the overthrow of the Catholic King James II, who was replaced by his Protestant daughter Mary and her Dutch husband, William of Orange.

Motives for the revolution were complex and included both political and religious concerns. The event ultimately changed how England was governed, giving Parliament more power over the monarchy and planting seeds for the beginnings of a political democracy.

# The Sixth Block

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- The "Glorious Revolution" (1688) and the "English Bill of Rights" (1689)
- The "English Bill of Rights" asserted the nation's "ancient rights and liberties", some of which include:
  - No taxation without consent of Parliament (A1S7C1)
  - Right to petition the King for redress of grievances (BOR 1<sup>st</sup> A)
  - No quartering of troops during peacetime (BOR 3<sup>rd</sup> A)
  - Freedom of speech, the right to bear arms (BOR 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> A)
  - No excessive bail or cruel and unusual punishments (BOR 8<sup>th</sup> A)
  - Right to trial by a jury of your peers ( A3S2C3 & BOR 4<sup>th</sup> A)
  - The right to due process (BOR 5<sup>th</sup> A)



# **So, Where are we today?**

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Forcing Religious communities to provide services that are against their faith?

Threats of Federal Taxation of Churches?

Closure of Churches as “non-essential” services?

Government collusion/pressure with private companies to censor publication of speech?

# So, Where are we today?

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Indefinite imprisonment of citizens without the right to Habeas Corpus, indictment by a Grand Jury, speedy trial, or trial by jury?

Can be “subject for the same offense be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb”?

Execute punishment without trial by jury?

No right to be tried by an impartial jury?

Use the court system to prosecute political opponents?

Use other Executive Agencies to harass political opponents?

# So, Where are we today?

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The inheritance tax still exists?

Proposed tax on Fair Market Value of investment holdings, including retirement accounts?

Proposed tax on “Unrealized” gains on real property?

Fees, fines and penalties are set and administered by Executive agencies?



# So, Where are we today?

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Czars appointed without confirmation by the Senate?

Confiscation of private property for non-public use?

Constant debasement of the currency?

Laws regulating arms?

**What are your additions to  
this list?**

# So, What are YOU Going to Do?

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- You now see that the principles emblazoned in our **DOI, USC and BOR** were almost 700 years old when written and are now over 900 years old and not just an **EXPERIMENT!**
- A common refrain in the 18<sup>th</sup> as today is "**We've fallen asleep.**"
- Now that you've been reminded with a small part of your history, it is up to YOU to ACT to **Restore Liberty!**
- *"... So what is it that you wish? What would you have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me..."*