Indiana Invests in National Treasures

In 1765 John Adams wrote, "Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people . . . " Tucked away in the American heartland, The Liberty Fund and the Remnant Trust, are keeping Adams' call. Located in Indianapolis and Winona Lake respectively, these institutions are preserving and transmitting the ideas that have shaped western civilization and that have manifested in the American experiment—freedom, dignity, rule of law, reason, equality, and justice. Both institutions look to the past to establish a citizenry worthy of their own democracy.

From Plato to Mills, the canon of the West bares these ideas, which continue to echo their wisdom today. Based on an ardent belief that these ideas still hold relevance for today, the Liberty Fund and the Remnant Trust are exposing the world to the best of them. For their part, the Liberty Fund's publishing activities, seminars and educational resources invite lovers of freedom to converse with the great thinkers of the past and present and to determine how our future might be shaped by them. The Remnant Trust truly democratizes history. Through its investment in rare, historic works and allowing people to interact with the artifacts, the Remnant Trust blows the dust off of these ideas and presents them to a new generation in the hopes of exciting curiosity.

Both institutions were established by Hoosier businessmen who used their private enterprise for the public good. The Liberty Fund was established by Pierre F. Goodrich, an Indianapolis businessman whose relentless drive to understand human freedom led him to create an organization that continues the search across history and in rigorous conversations. Likewise, the Remnant Trust's founder, Brian Bex, has used his wealth to invest in posterity by allowing citizens young and old to interact with the thinkers that left us an intellectual inheritance.

While born in Indiana, these institutions exhibit significant national influence. To date the Liberty Fund has hosted over 3000 seminars in the United States and around the world. And the Remnant Trust partners with institutions all over the United States to host exhibits. Currently, the Remnant Trust has an exhibit on display at the Pulliam Family Great Books Gallery at the Newseum in Washington D.C.

In the pages ahead, you'll have a chance to dig deeper into the stories of these national treasures. This section begins with a snapshot of the life of Pierre F. Goodrich, the founder of the Liberty Fund. It goes on to introduce readers to the resources available on the Online Library of Liberty and the Liberty Fund's other educational resources. Following the exposé on the Liberty Fund, readers can glimpse some of the historical treasures held by the Remnant Trust and see how some of these works have contributed the American idea. Finally, readers can learn about the Pulliam family's partnership with the Remnant Trust to host the Great Books exhibit at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. From the Federalist Papers to the first printing of the U.S. Constitution in pamphlet form, this exhibit displays works that could be considered the cornerstones of freedom.

The Liberty Fund

Indianapolis businessman Pierre F. Goodrich harbored an insatiable curiosity, driven by a desire to understand the nature of human freedom. Mr. Goodrich read widely in the Great Books tradition, works from both the east and west. Authors Goodrich frequently recommended include Aeschylus, Thucydides, Cicero, St. Augustine, John Locke, Adam Smith, William Blackstone, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Goethe, Lord Acton, F. A. Hayek, and Richard M. Weaver. Guiding his conversation with these great thinkers were three questions: What am I? Can I? Ought I?

What am I? Can I? Ought I?

Goodrich was born on September 10, 1894 in Winchester, Indiana. His father served as governor of Indiana and was a successful businessman. The younger Goodrich favored ideas over politics but did follow his father's footsteps into business. He successfully led the Indiana Telephone Company, Peoples Loan and Trust and Ayrshire Collieries Corporation.

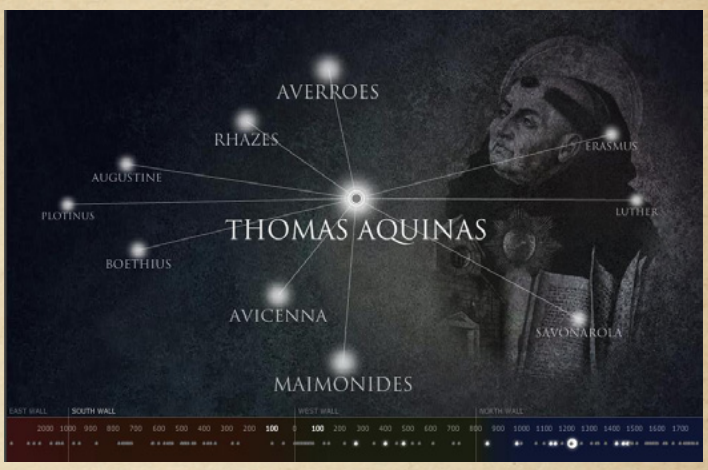
He thought leadership and civic enterprises included board service for his alma mater, Wabash College as well as the Great Books Foundation, Mont Pelerin Society, Institute for Humane Studies and Foundation for Economic Freedom. His two worlds converged when he founded the Liberty Fund in 1960 and published "Education in a Free Society" in 1973 with co-author Benjamin Rogge.

Mr. Goodrich observed that human beings are far from perfect and have only a partial understanding of their own nature. In turn, he believed institutions to be fraught with imperfections. He was particularly concerned that intellectual hubris can lead to an unfounded certainty about the nature of the world and to dangerous "solutions." This abuse of reason, he thought, leads to restrictive institutional arrangements that concentrate political and economic power. Such concentrations invariably erode liberty and moral values.

The responsible course of action in an imperfect world, Mr. Goodrich believed, consists of making those choices that favor liberty from among the imperfect options available. A commitment to liberty in all its dimensions (intellectual, religious, economic, and political among them) offers the best chance to decentralize power and to release individual, creative initiatives. A free society may maintain and enhance individual liberty and excellence, a genuine concern for others, a framework for social order, and economic wellbeing. Mr. Goodrich applauded the development of private competitive enterprise, the rule of law, and the separation of power for their contribution to and protection of liberty.

Mr. Goodrich believed that education in a free society requires a dialogue centered around the great ideas of civilization. He saw learning as an ongoing process of discovery, not limited to traditional institutional settings or specific ages. Education is, in his view, a lifelong responsibility of each individual.

Mr. Goodrich founded the Liberty Fund as an institutional embodiment of his quest for understanding. Upon his death in 1973, Mr. Goodrich left most of his estate to the Foundation for the purpose of exploring the many dimensions of liberty. This interest is reflected in the name he chose for the Foundation. Today, Liberty Fund continues in the conviction that the best way to promote the ideal of a society free and responsible individuals is through full and open discussion among people of varying ages, backgrounds and occupations. As a complement to that process, Liberty Fund publishes books that are essential elements in the discussion of liberty and responsibility. The Liberty Fund catalogue has accumulated a catalogue of about 400 titles that have contributed to our understanding of liberty.



In addition to the 180-some seminars the Liberty Fund holds around the world each year, they have brought great ideas and great conversations to citizens. The organization manages three educational websites dedicated to transmitting the ideas of liberty. The Library of Economics and Liberty (www.econlib.org/) features articles, book reviews, multimedia resources, and a repository of curriculum ideas for teachers. Numerous great books on economics and liberty are available in their entirety on the website. In addition to "Econ Lib," the Liberty Fund hosts the online Library of Liberty (oll.libertyfund.org/), which makes available critical collected works from the Enlightenment, the Founding Era as well as on natural law and other topics. Users are free to create and share their own reading lists, and carry a conversation with other inquiring minds through the forum. The third web property that the Liberty Fund manages is the Library of Law and Liberty (www.libertylawsite.org). This rich repository of commentary, blogs, podcasts and book reviews also contains a forum for individuals to interact around great ideas. Through these mediums, citizens can continue the legacy left by Pierre F. Goodrich and perpetuated by the Liberty Fund; that is, to inquire about great ideas and to pursue freedom in all of its manifestations.

Code of Ur-Nammu

Circa 2050 BC

The Code of Ur-Nammu was written during the reign of Ur-Nammu (ca. 2050 B.C.), who ruled after his predecessor successfully expelled the Gutian invaders from Sumeria. Ur-Nammu initiated a vigorous revival of Sumerian culture, of which the code is the most enduring legacy. It is one of the earliest lists of laws yet discovered and is usually seen as the precursor to the Code of Hammurabi. Although the Sumerians were not Semites, the civilization they created shaped the Semitic empires that followed, including the Babylonian Empire of Hammurabi. To the extent that the original cuneiform can be interpreted, Ur-Nammu's Code is a list of tax codes, ceremonial laws, courtroom procedures, rules for litigation, and penalties for various infractions. It is an early step on the long road toward the ideal of the rule of law.

Gilgamesh
?-2700 BC

Urukagina
Circa 2350 BC

The Code of Hammurabi
1792-1750 BC

Moses
1300 BC

King David
1010-970 BC

Homer
900 BC

Upanishas
1000-650 BC

Micah
800 BC

Isaiah
800 BC

Amos
800 BC

Hosea
800 BC

Hosea
Circa 786-721 BC

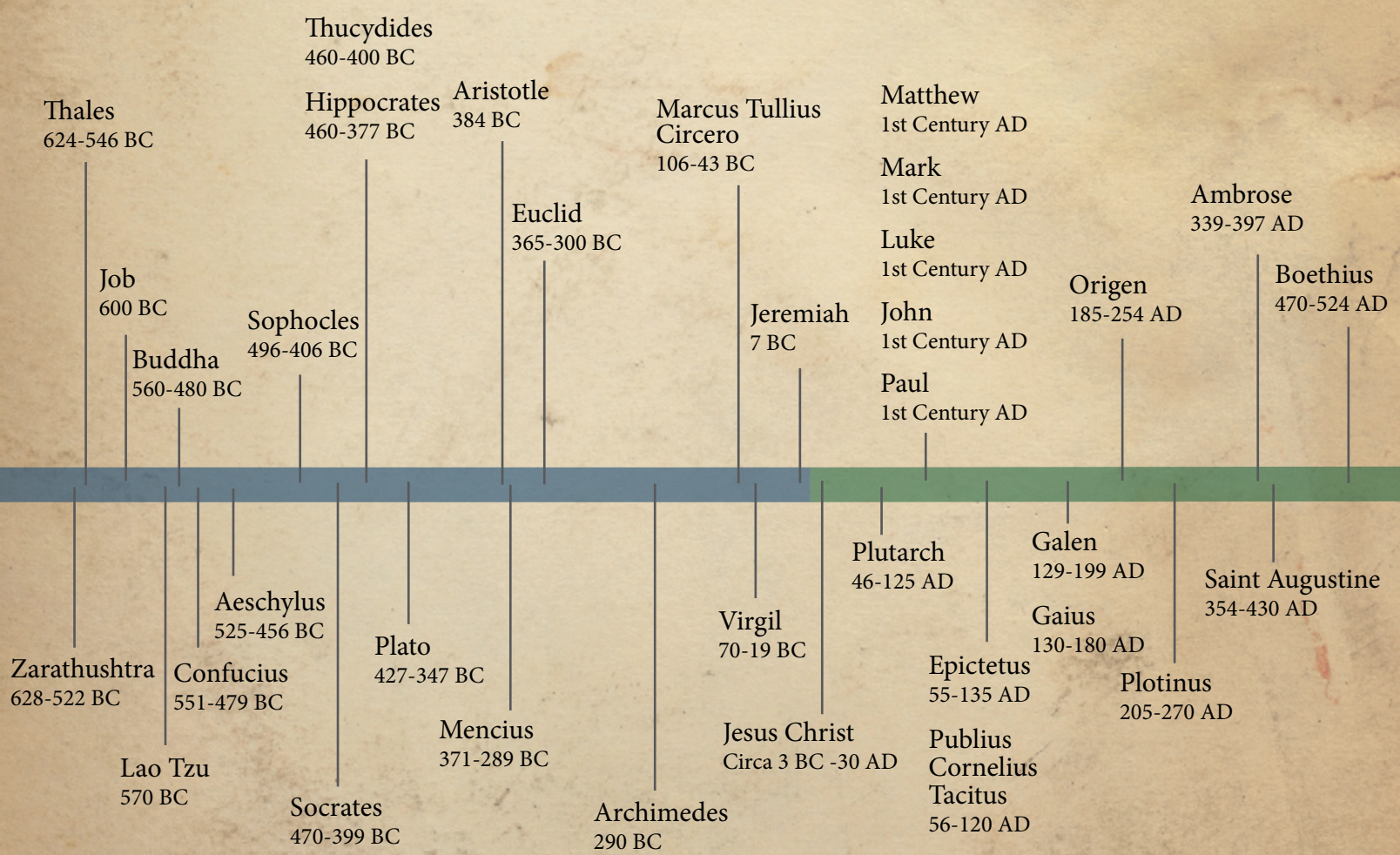
Hesiod
700 BC

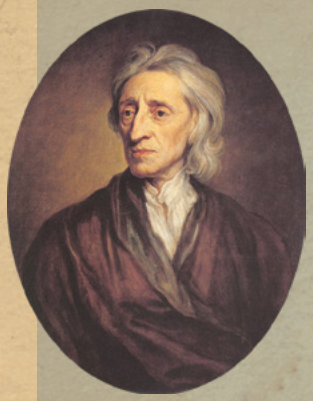
Thucydides

Circa 460-400 BC

Thucydides, who lived during the second half of the fifth century B.C., is considered the greatest of the ancient Greek historians. His work, The Peloponnesian War, recounts the fifth-century B.C. struggle between Athens and Sparta and is the first piece of historical writing to combine political and ethical reflections with history. His personal history is unknown except for the small bits of information revealed in his narrative. Thucydides was probably born a few years before 460 B.C. and died sometime after the peace of 404. The abruptness with which the history ends may indicate that he died a sudden death in those violent times.

His careful attention to research and his evident concern for accuracy have left an enduring mark on the discipline of history. Heroes and villains are treated with full attention to their blemishes as well as their virtues. Nor did Thucydides hesitate to criticize Athenian policy or his own actions as a general during the war. He saw history as more than just a list of events. It was rather an enduring record of all aspects of the time, and something that would be of value for later generations. "To hear this history rehearsed, for that there be inserted no fables, shall be perhaps not delightful. But he that desires to look into the truth of things done and which (according to the condition of humanity) may be done again, or at least their like, he shall find enough herein to make him think it profitable. And it is compiled rather for everlasting possession than to be rehearsed for a prize."





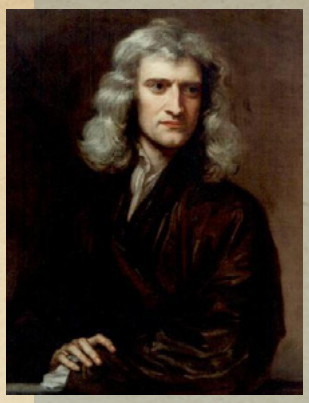
John Locke
1632-1704 AD

John Locke (b. 1632, Wrington, Somerset, England; d. 1704, Oates, Essex) is considered one of the first philosophers of the Enlightenment and the father of liberalism. Although it would not be correct to say that Locke favored democracy, he did advocate limits on the power of the sovereign, confining that person's authority to the protection of the individual's natural rights to life, liberty, and property.

The majority of Locke's liberal positions can be found in his extensive essay entitled The Two Treatises of Government (1689). The first treatise refutes the arguments in favor of the divine rights of kings propounded by Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) in his work, Patriarcha. It is the second treatise that contains the essentials of Locke's political theory. Here the philosopher put forward his famous ethical argument regarding the hypothetical state of nature in which humans enjoyed most of their natural rights without the state. From this fundamental assumption stem most of Locke's theories. The fact that property could be freely exchanged, sold, or accumulated in that natural condition led Locke to argue that governments ought not interfere with most aspects of the economy and society. Moreover, no people living in a natural state of freedom would consent to have all their liberty taken away. Therefore, government requires the consent of the people, and this makes all government conditional. The role of the state should be limited to protecting life, liberty, and property from those few predatory members of the human race whom Locke referred to as the "quarrelsome and the contentious."1 Since the role of government is limited, its power should also be limited.

The particular form government took did not greatly concern Locke, except to exclude absolute monarchy. The limitation of powers he propounded came primarily through a separation of executive and legislative roles derived ultimately from the sovereignty of the people. Locke referred to the decision to form a government as the original constitution, composing an authority no lesser power could alter. Moreover, the legislature was authorized by the constitution, and not vice versa. Therefore, a constitution is superior to ordinary laws created by any legislature. The liberal theory of government put forward by Locke had a tremendous influence on later thinkers and politicians. The American Founding Fathers were profoundly influenced by Locke's idea of a limited constitutional regime.

In addition to Locke's role as a political theorist, his system of metaphysics established the epistemological foundations for modern philosophic and scientific empiricism.

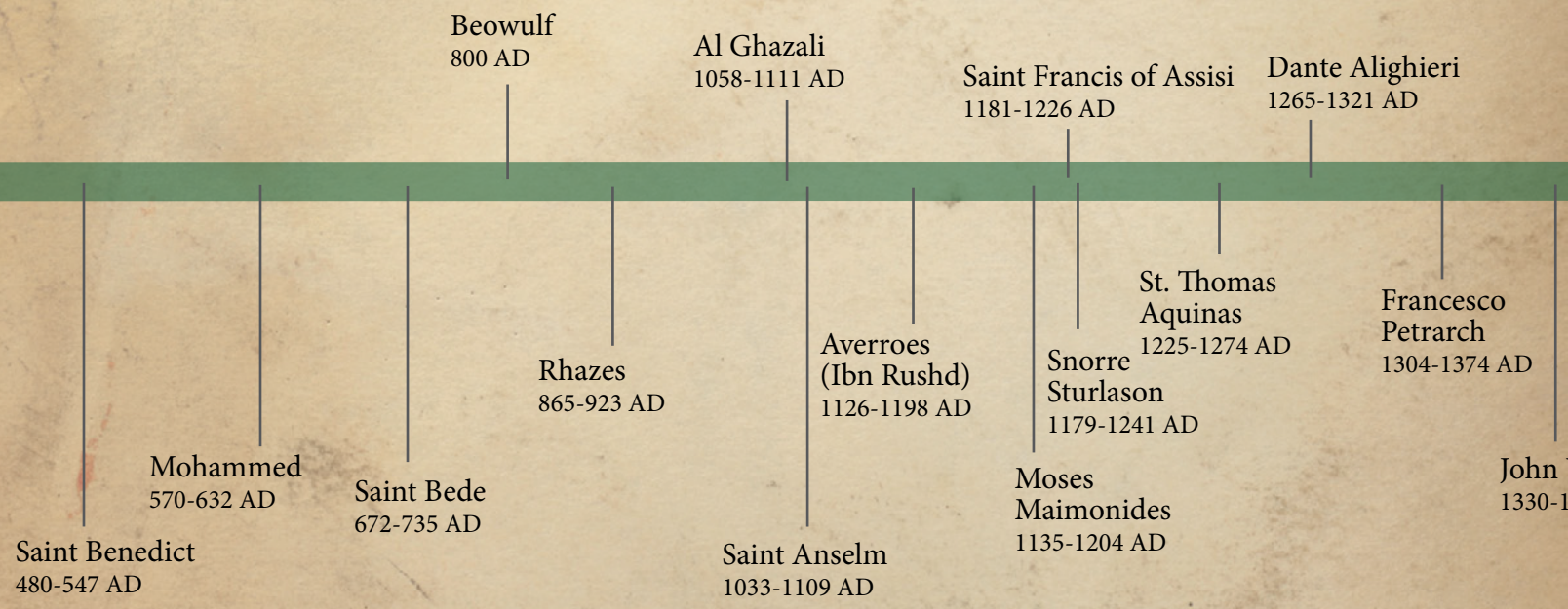


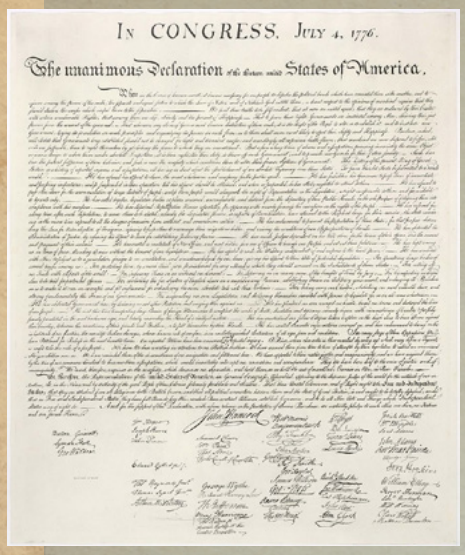
Sir Isaac Newton
1642-1727 AD

Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727), one of the greatest scientific minds of all time, was born in Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire, England, and died in London. His work laid the foundations for modern physics, astronomy, and, along with Wilhelm Leibniz, mathematics. His contribution to modern science is aptly described as the "Newtonian revolution."

Newton's best known contribution to science is in the field of mechanics and is described in his famous work Principia (1687), which explains the laws governing the motion of physical objects (heavenly and otherwise). Principia rests on the new branch of mathematics that Newton invented simultaneously with Leibniz (1646-1716), calculus, a tool that allowed mathematicians to move beyond the work done by the ancient Greeks for the first time in almost two thousand years. Newton's genius was immediately recognized, and he was elected the head of the Royal Academy of Science. He was also a member of the French Académie des Sciences and was the first scientist to become a knight of the realm and to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

Newton provided explanations for fundamental natural phenomena: gravitation, the motion of the planets, and the mechanics of physics on earth. He united all of these phenomena under a single law of motion that destroyed the accepted Aristotelian system. Newton also refined the scientific techniques of hypothesis, deduction, and experimentation. His unprecedented contributions laid the groundwork for modern science.



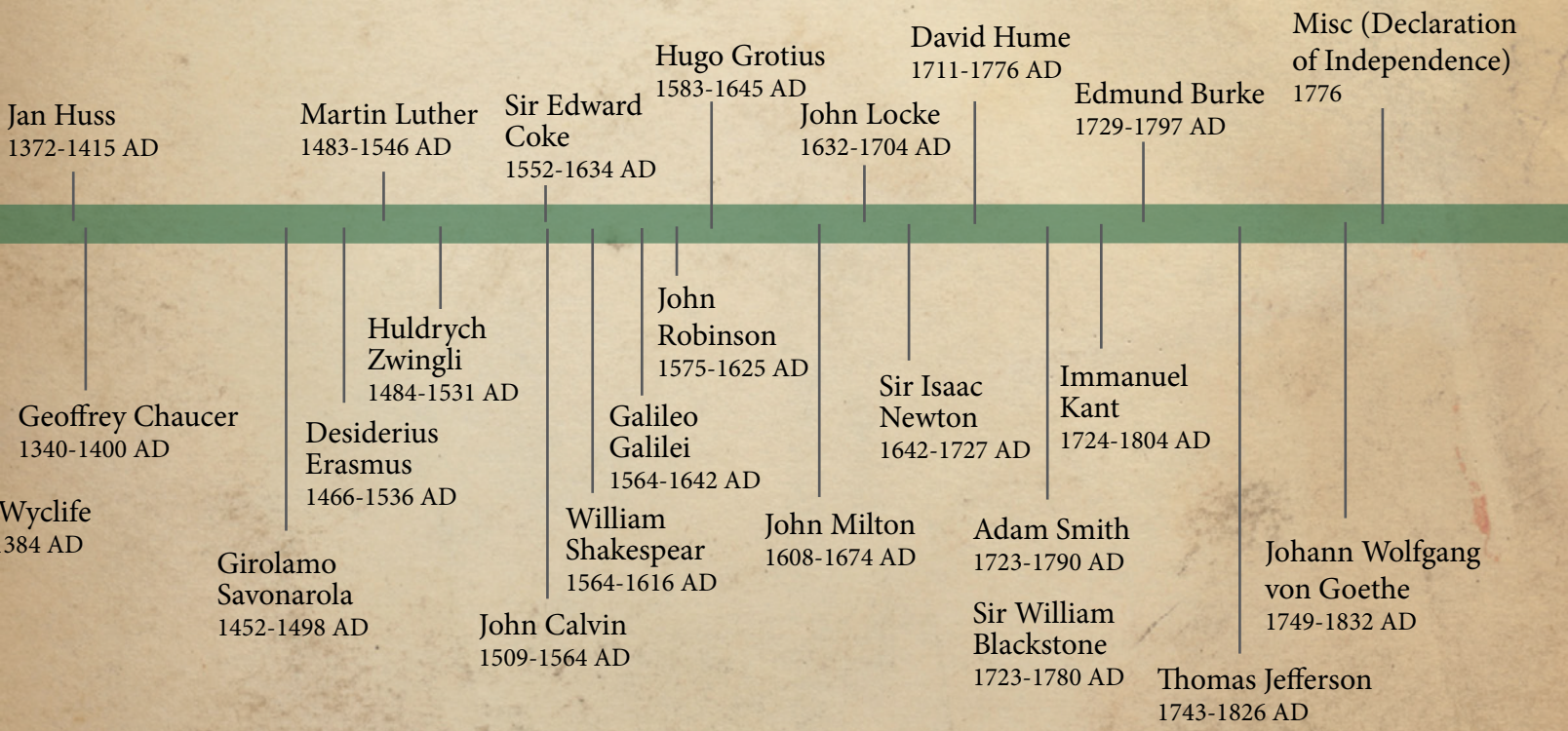

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America,

Declaration of Independence

1776 AD

This final inscription on the wall of the Goodrich Room at Wabash College needs little explanation. It is the declaration whereby the inhabitants of regions once considered the possessions of Great Britain made known to the world the causes compelling them to dissolve their political bonds to the British Empire and so "assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them." After nearly two years of considerable effort to avoid separation through various appeals and petitions to the king in Parliament, the Second Continental Congress concluded that England, against all previous precedents and customary practice, was bent on subjugating the colonists to its will. Subsequently, in the midst of America's resistance to imperial aggression, Richard Henry Lee of the state of Virginia made a motion for independence that was accepted on July 2, 1776. That motion introduced the first written declaration issued by a people proclaiming the liberty to choose their own political regime. It was given to Thomas Jefferson, also of Virginia, to compose the declaration, which, with minor alterations made by the drafting committee and by the Congress, was accepted on July 4, 1776.

The validity of the case the Declaration of Independence presents has long been a matter of dispute among revisionists on both sides of the Atlantic. Some argue that the empire expected only its just due for the support of the government's long-standing debt, exacerbated in part by the French and Indian War of the 1750s, in which the mother country had helped defend the colonies. From the American perspective, however, more was being asked than simply a provision to help reduce the empire's debt. Excessive imperial expenditure was a persistent problem in England going back more than a century. If Parliament should be successful in attaching the domestic revenues of the colonists, it would likely be a permanent yoke from which no relief through appeal would be possible.

The course of past understandings and practices appeared to be on the side of the colonies. From nearly the time of their establishment, with but few exceptions that were glaring and quickly reversed (e.g., the creation of the Dominion of New England under Governor Andros from 1684 to 1689), England's rule was hardly felt in the colonies. The colonists were left to their own devices, and indeed were expected to govern themselves in all internal matters. Precedent supported the view that the king was sovereign, reigning not through Parliament, however, but via the distinct colonial legislatures. Thus, when Charles II sought to establish a permanent revenue "for the support of the Government in Virginia, the King did not apply to the English Parliament, but to the General Assembly [of Virginia]."1 Consequently, colonial courts and legislatures took on constitutional standing as valid as any legal entity in Great Britain itself, sanctioned by long-standing practice under English constitutional law. The question remaining, then, was whether or not Parliament had the authority to institute practices rarely or never before enacted, or at least not enforced, on a people it did not directly represent. Richard Bland, a prominent member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, along with others such as John Dickinson of Philadelphia, made the important argument that Parliament could not institute internal colonial taxation for this very reason. Completely independent of the king's recognition of colonial rights, one could easily argue on the basis of leges non scriptae that Parliament's past inability, and at times unwillingness, to involve itself in the internal affairs of the colonies defined its legal position as separate from, and nonbinding on, the domestic practices of the colonists. In light of this understanding, persistent attempts to enact revenue acts after 1764 revealed a concerted effort to change the legal standing of the colonies. After repeated petitions to the king to recognize what his office had always recognized before failed to prompt him to restrain Parliament, it became apparent that the king was acting in concert with that body to subjugate colonial liberties. To Americans, this underscored the accuracy of the Declaration's assertion that the king (in Parliament) had "erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance."