

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

*Inside the Vault:
A Summary View of the Rights of British America*

April 7, 2022

The session will start shortly. Please note:

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.

Our Team

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Dr. Andrew Robertson - Associate Professor of History at the CUNY Graduate Center and at Lehman College, The City University of New York
- Shelby Miller - Curatorial Intern
- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
-

During the Session



- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature.**
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

A
SUMMARY VIEW
OF THE
RIGHTS
OF
BRITISH AMERICA.

Set forth in some
RESOLUTIONS
INTENDED FOR THE
INSPECTION
OF THE PRESENT
DELEGATES
OF THE
PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA,
Now IN
CONVENTION.

BY A NATIVE, AND MEMBER OF THE
HOUSE OF BURGESSES. *J. Jefferson.*

WILLIAMSBURG: PRINTED:
PHILADELPHIA: Re-Printed by JOHN DUNLAP,

M, DCC, LXXIV.

Today's Document

Background

- What was the House of Burgesses?
- What was the Virginia Convention and what were they discussing?
- What was Jefferson's role?
- Why was the pamphlet published anonymously?
- What is British America?

A Summary View of British Rights in North America, 1774

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respectful acceptance. And this his Majesty will think we have reason to expect when he reflects that he is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definitive powers, to assist in working the great machine of government, erected for their use, and consequently subject to their superintendance. And in order that these

Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of British Rights in North America*, 1774.
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“And in order that these our rights, as well as the invasions of them, may be laid more fully before his majesty, to take a view of them from the origin and first settlement of these countries. . . . To remind him that our ancestors, before their emigration to America, were the free inhabitants of the British dominions in Europe, and possessed a right which nature has given to all men, of departing from the country in which chance, not choice, has placed them, of going in quest of new habitations, and of there establishing new societies, under such laws and regulations as to them shall seem most likely to promote public happiness. . . .



Robert Sayer, *The American military pocket atlas; being an approved collection of correct maps*, 1776.

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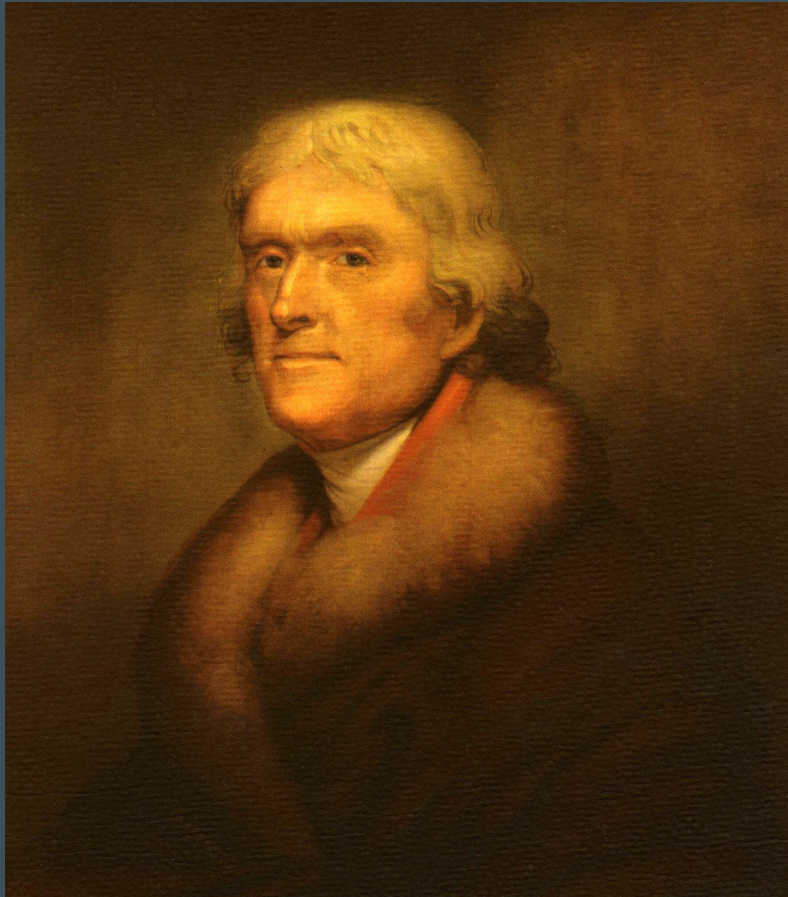
A Summary View of British Rights in North America, 1774

Nor was ever any claim of superiority or dependence asserted over them by that mother country from which they had migrated; and were such a claim made, it is believed that his majesty's subjects in Great Britain have too firm a feeling of the rights derived to them from their ancestors, to bow down the sovereignty of their state before such visionary pretensions. . . . Not a shilling was ever issued from the public treasures of his majesty, or his ancestors, for their assistance, till of very late times, after the colonies had become established on a firm and permanent footing. . . .



Engraving of "His most Sacred Majesty George III" by Thomas Frye, 1755. Gilder Lehrman Collection

A Summary View of British Rights in North America, 1774



“That the exercise of a free trade with all parts of the world, possessed by the American colonists, as of natural right, and which no law of their own had taken away or abridged, was next the object of unjust encroachment. . . . But that we do not point out to his majesty the injustice of these acts, with intent to rest on that principle the cause of their nullity; but to shew that experience confirms the propriety of those political principles which exempt us from the jurisdiction of the British parliament. The true ground on which we declare these acts void is, that the British parliament has no right to exercise authority over us.”

Thomas Jefferson print based on a painting by Rembrandt Peale. Gilder Lehrman Collection

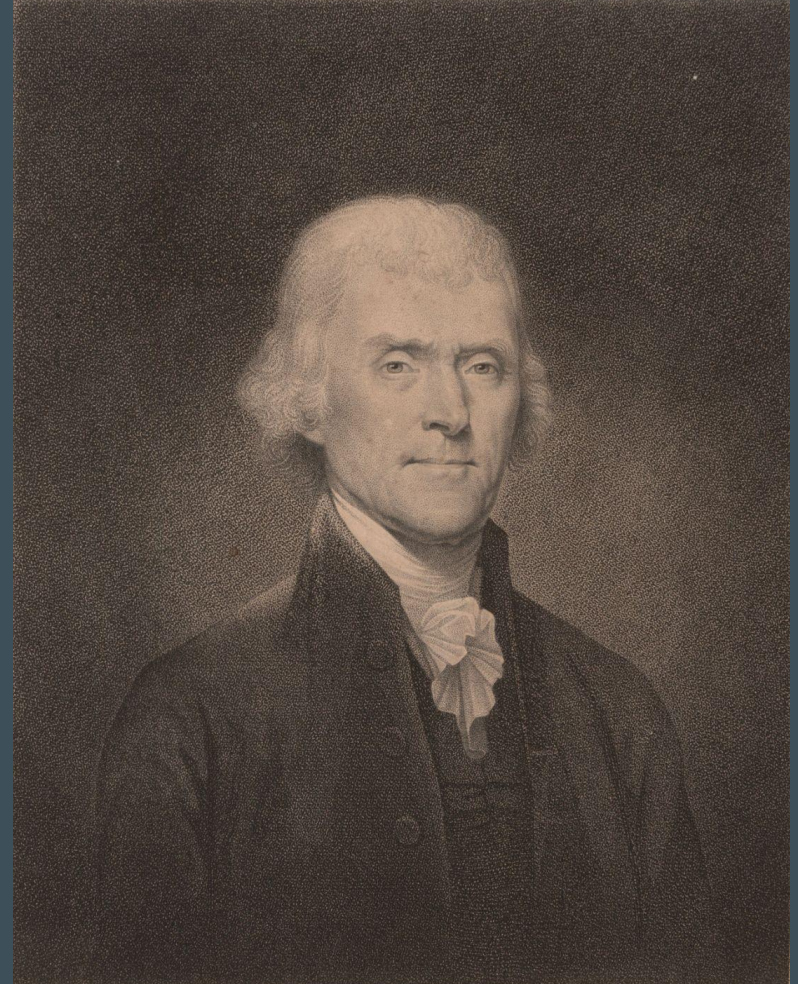
A Summary View of British Rights in North America, 1774

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American legislatures. For the most trifling reasons, and sometimes for no conceivable reason at all, his majesty has rejected laws of the most salutary tendency. The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies, where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa; yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to a prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his majesty's negative: Thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few African corsairs to the lasting interests of the American states, and to the rights of human nature deeply wounded by this infamous practice. Nay, the single interposition of an interested indi-

A Summary View of British Rights in North America, 1774

“That in order to enforce the arbitrary measures before complained of, his majesty has from time to time sent among us large bodies of armed forces, not made up of the people here, nor raised by the authority of our laws: Did his majesty possess such a right as this, it might swallow up all our other rights whenever he should think proper. But his majesty has no right to land a single armed man on our shores, and those whom he sends here are liable to our laws made for the suppression and punishment of riots, routs, and unlawful assemblies; or are hostile bodies, invading us in defiance of law. . . . To render these proceedings still more criminal against our laws, instead of subjecting the military to the civil powers, his majesty has expressly made the civil subordinate to the military.”



Engraving of Thomas Jefferson.
The Gilder Lehrman Collection

Upcoming Programs

- *Inside the Vault*, May 5 at 7 p.m. EST (4 p.m. PT)
 - We will be discussing the life and times of President Theodore Roosevelt.
- Summer Teacher Seminars - Register now!
 - Explore in-person and virtual programs, including our first-ever Teacher Symposium at Gettysburg College. Courses include:
 - *Foundations of American Government: 1761-1801*, Dr. Andrew Robertson, Lehman College & CUNY Graduate Center
 - *Colonial North America*, Dr. Alan Taylor, University of Virginia
 - *Women in the American Revolution*, Dr. Carol Berkin, Baruch College, CUNY
 - *Revolutionary America*, Dr. Denver Brunsman, George Washington University

PD Opportunity in Chicago

- We are pleased to offer free in-person professional development in Chicago, IL as part of the "America's Unseen Soldiers" series.
 - The workshop will feature a 3-hour lecture and Q&A with Professor Steven Rosales on "Fighting the Peace at Home: Mexican American Veterans and the 1944 GI Bill of Rights" and "Macho Nation? Chicano Soldiering, Sexuality, and Manhood during the Vietnam War Era."
 - There will be a pedagogy workshop on Latina/o Soldiers In World Wars I and II, and a guided tour of Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.