

# 2.6

## **Creating An American Identity**



## **As a Young Historian, I will be able to...**

- **Explore how English traditions influenced the development of colonial governments.**
- **Explain how the ideas of the Enlightenment shaped the colonists' worldview.**
- **Describe how the Great Awakening affected colonial society.**

# Foundations of English Government

English King had to follow the **Magna Carta**- A document that limits the Kings ability to tax & guarantees due process

Settlers in Colonies argued they deserved same rights as English Citizens

Types of Government varied in Colonies depending on regions

Colonists also believed in **English Common Law**- people have individual liberties

# Foundations of English Government

In 1689 King James II is overthrown in the **Glorious Revolution** that replaced him with King William & Queen Mary

They sign **English Bill of Rights**- New guarantees of freedom & restates the Magna Carta

Rights included **Habeas Corpus**- No one is held in prison without being charged for a crime

**Salutary Neglect**- Colonies have self local rule, but have to cooperate with the Crown for economic & war policies



# **Freedom of the Press!**

**1734- New York Weekly criticizes the  
governor of New York**

**John Peter Zenger is imprisoned for libel  
(lying in print) even though he  
didn't write articles**

**Zenger is freed after 8 months & sets  
groundwork for freedom of the  
press**

# Brand New Ideas

**Enlightenment-** Movement that believed problems could be solved with human reason

Philosophers search for ideas of “natural laws” that could be applied to government, society, & economics

**John Locke-** Believed people had natural rights that came from God, not monarchs

**Benjamin Franklin-** A great thinker for Enlightenment who sought knowledge (founding father)



# Religion in the Colonies

**Church is very important in the colonies,  
began the movement called **The Great Awakening**.**

**This was the idea that personal religious  
experience was need for salvation.  
Preachers would attract large crowds**

**This lead to new churches in the colonies  
& helped influence religious  
tolerance in the colonies**

**New beliefs would lay the groundwork for  
democratic ideas in the colonies**