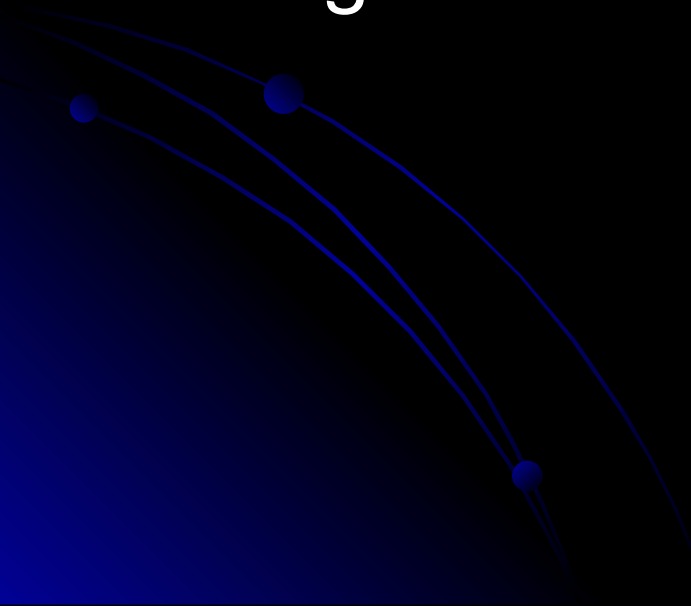



EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE



Four European nations rivaled in that overseas expansion :

- Spain
- the Netherlands
- France
- England.



- Christopher Columbus: set out from Spain, on August 3, 1492 and landed on one of the Bahama Islands on October 12, 1492.
 - The Old Norse tale Vinland Saga narrates how the adventurous Leif Ericson and a band of wandering Norsemen settled briefly on the northeast coast of America in the first decade of the 11th century.
 - the first permanent English settlement in America was made at Jamestown in 1607
- 



John Smith, 1580-1631.

***Description of New
England*** (1916):

"here nature and liberty
affords us that freely,
which in England we want
or costs us dearly."

the first book on America /1608

- ***A true relation of such occurrences and accidents of note as hath happened in Virginia since the first planting of that colony, which is now resident in the South part thereof, till the last return from thence.***
- written by Captain Smith:
- a vivid description of arrival in Virginia,
- the place selection and civil organization,
- their exploration of the James River,
- the first fearful Indian attack,
- their return to England after a two months' stay in Virginia.

the southern soil / Virginia / did not
prove favorable to literary growth

- "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the best of governments. God keep us from both."

1671, Governor Berkeley

PILGRIMS AND PURITANS

- The Pilgrims were a congregation of "Separatists" or non-conformists who determined "as pilgrims" to seek in the new continent a home where they might still possess their cherished freedom of worship, while living under English laws and following the customs and traditions of their mother-land.
- The band of Pilgrims landed from the Mayflower at Plymouth in December, 1620.
-

they established "not an agricultural community, nor a manufacturing community, nor a trading community; it was a thinking community."

Professor Tyler

- In 1636, the General Court of Massachusetts voted to establish a college at Newtown;
- John Harvard, dying two years later, bequeathed his library and half his estate to the school, which was then named Harvard College in his honor.
- In 1639, the first printing-press in America was set up at Cambridge.
- The colonists had their grammar schools which prepared for college; and by 1650 public instruction was compulsory in four of the Five New England colonies.

very strict ideas

- a person by nature was wholly sinful and could achieve good only by severe discipline.
- hard work was considered a religious duty and emphasis was laid on constant self-examination and self-discipline .
- drunkenness, gambling, and participation in theatrical performances were serious offenses.
- Cotton Mather (1663-1728), wrote more than 450 books of religious Cotton Mather content.

- The earliest literary efforts among the New England colonists were historical land narrative writings, some in the form of journals, a few, more ambitious, representing real attempts at formal history.



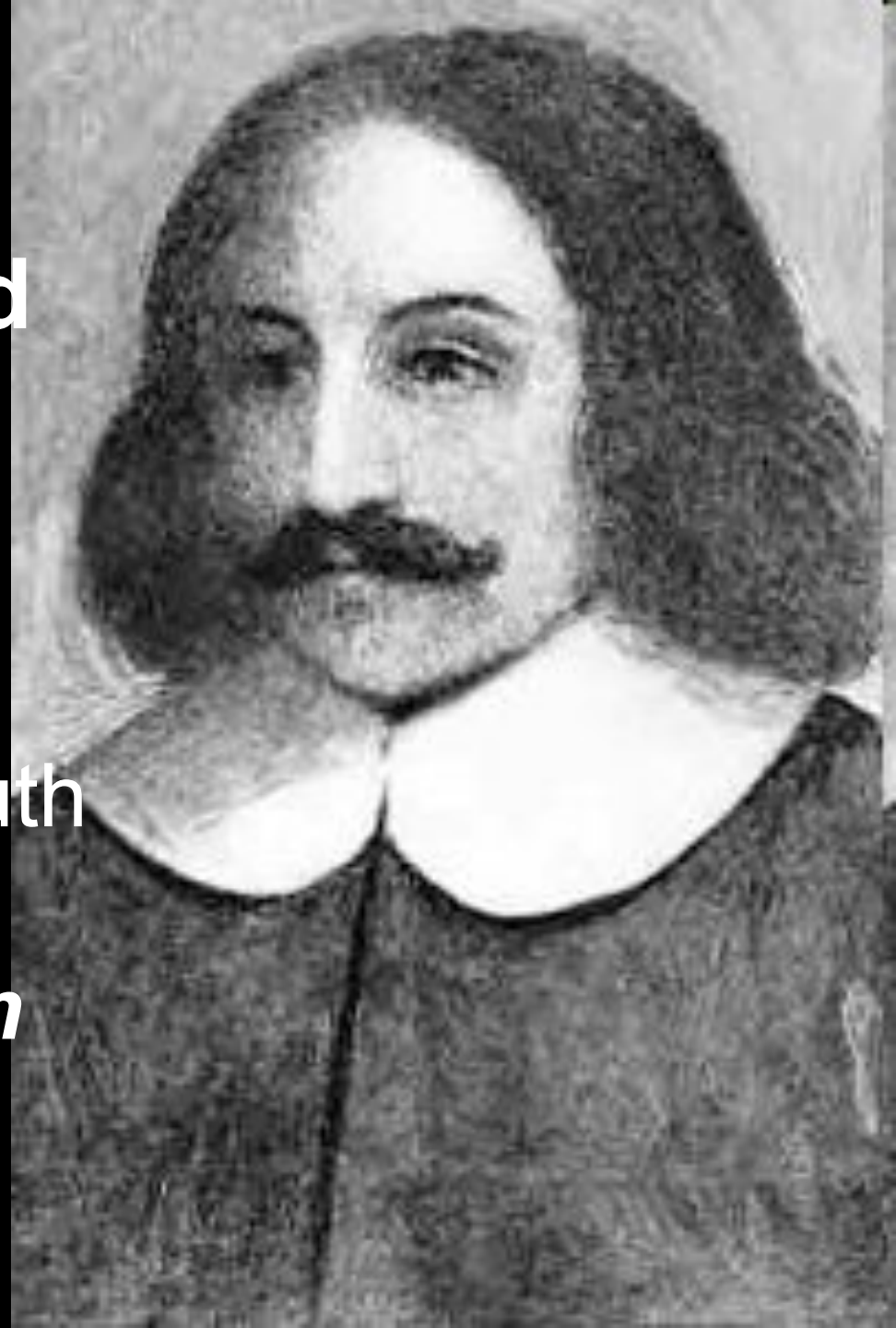
William Bradford

1590-1657

*Father of American
history*

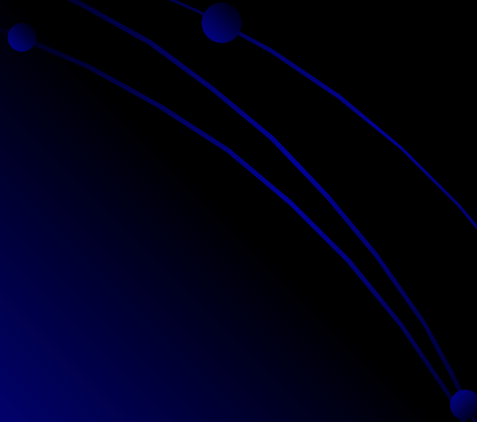
governor of Plymouth

*History of the
Plymouth Plantation*



Early Puritan Poetry

- The first English book printed in America - *The Whole Book of Psalms*, commonly known as the *Bay Psalm Book*, was printed on the new press at Cambridge in 1640



Anne Bradstreet, 1613-72

*"the Tenth Muse lately
sprung up in America."*

1650,
the first volume of her poems
was published in London.

The Four Monarchies - her most ambitious
poem, published, in 1650



Contemplations

*"I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,
The black-clad cricket bear a second part,
They kept one tune, and played on the same
string,*

Seeming to glory in their little art.

*Shall creatures abject thus their voices raise?
And in their kind resound their maker's praise,
Whilst I, as mute, can warble forth no higher
lays?...*

Edward Taylor

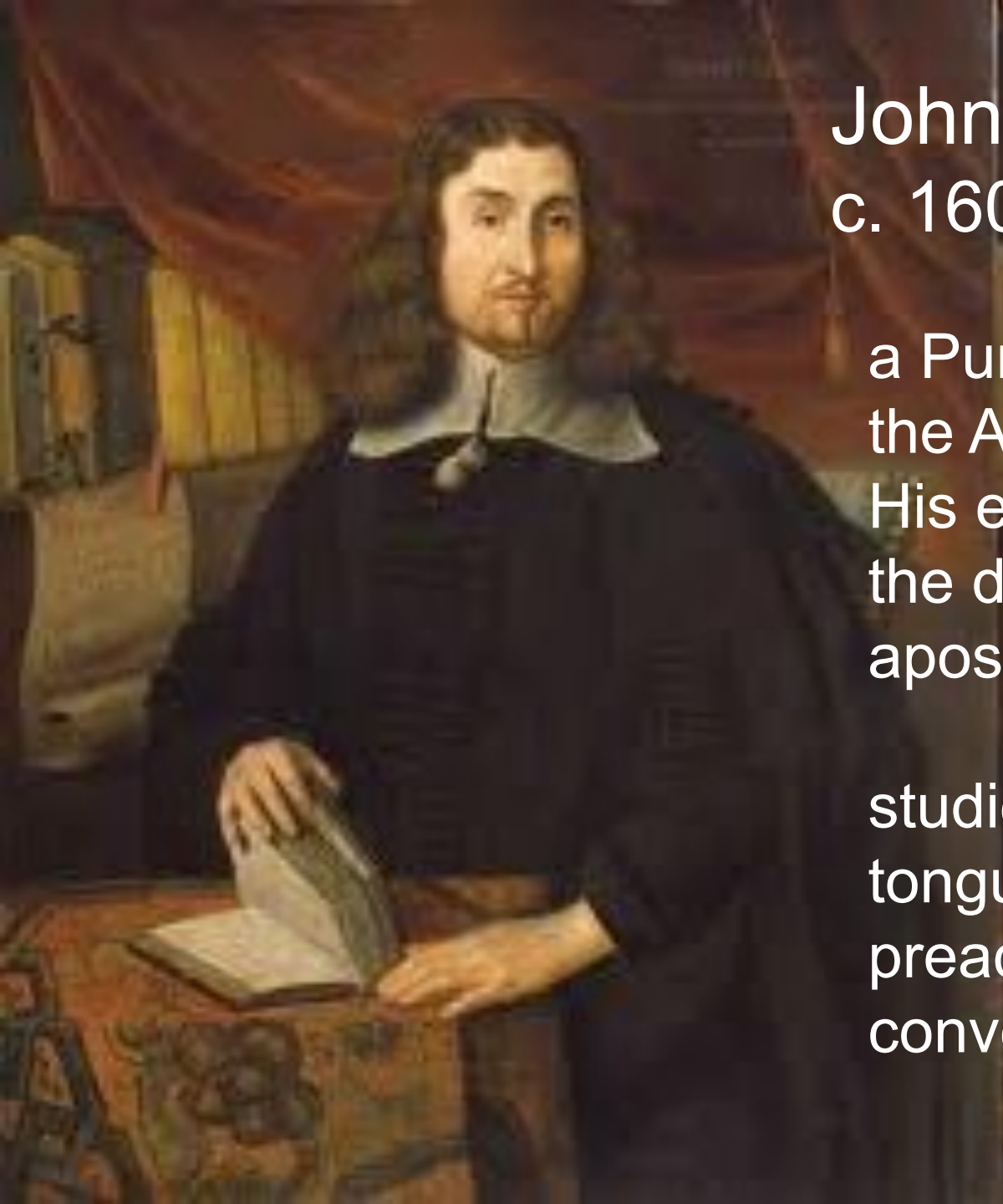
1642 – 1729

a Puritan
clergyman and
one of the finest
colonial poets,

a series of
Meditations (1686)
"the American
metaphysic"



E. J. Taylor



John Eliot

c. 1604 – 21 May 1690

a Puritan missionary to the American Indians. His efforts earned him the designation “the apostle to the Indians.”

studied their native tongue,
preached to them,
converted many,

I believe that the Indian has an understanding of the physical world and of the earth as a spiritual entity that is his, very much his own. The non-Indian can benefit a good deal by having that perception revealed to him.

Navarro Scott Momaday

- orally transmitted myths,
- legends,
- folktales,
- songs of Indian cultures related to the concept that all animals have souls or spirits that give them supernatural power
- Public recognition came to them relatively late / only in the mid-19th century

1750-1820
A NEW FREE NATION



- Colonial literature in the 18th century consisted largely of religious and practical books,
- such as the Bible,
- sermons and tracts,
- almanacs,
- medical books and scientific works .
- Newspapers /seven daily papers/ published a fair amount of poetry, mathematical puzzles , serialized satirical pieces, and a lot of announcements.
- Newspapers gradually became a strong literary and political force.

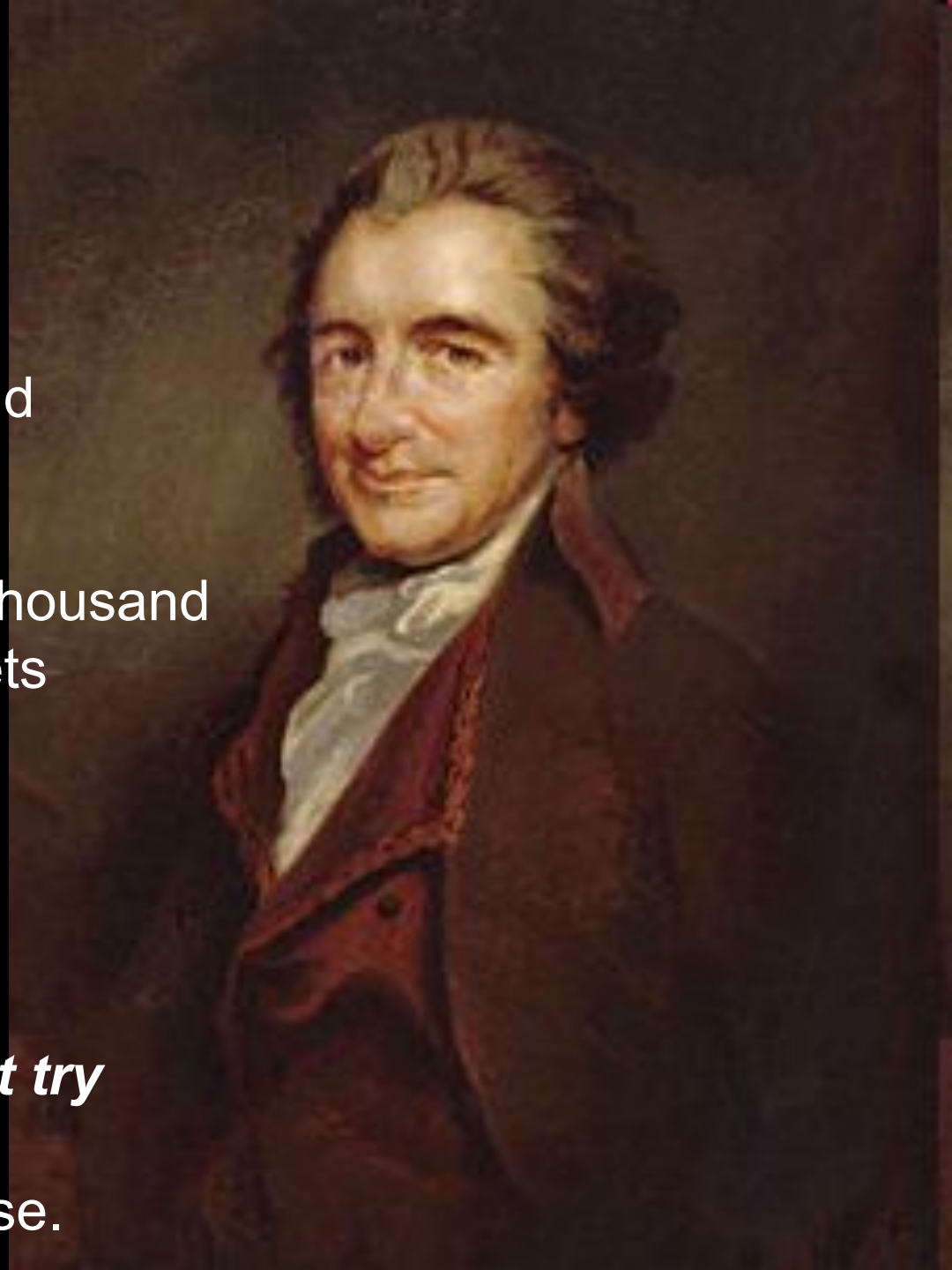
Thomas Paine

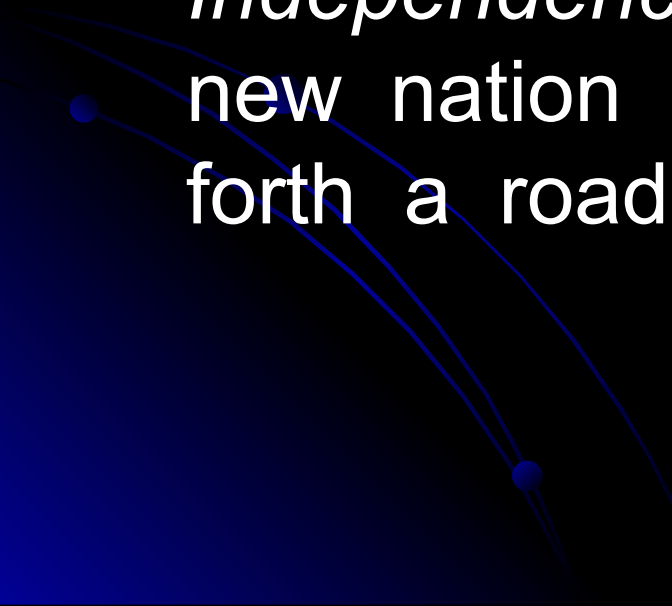
an English-American
political activist,
author, political theorist and
revolutionary

published more than two thousand
pro-revolutionary pamphlets

Common Sense
The Crisis

the opening sentence
***"These are the times that try
men's souls"***
became a proverbial phrase.



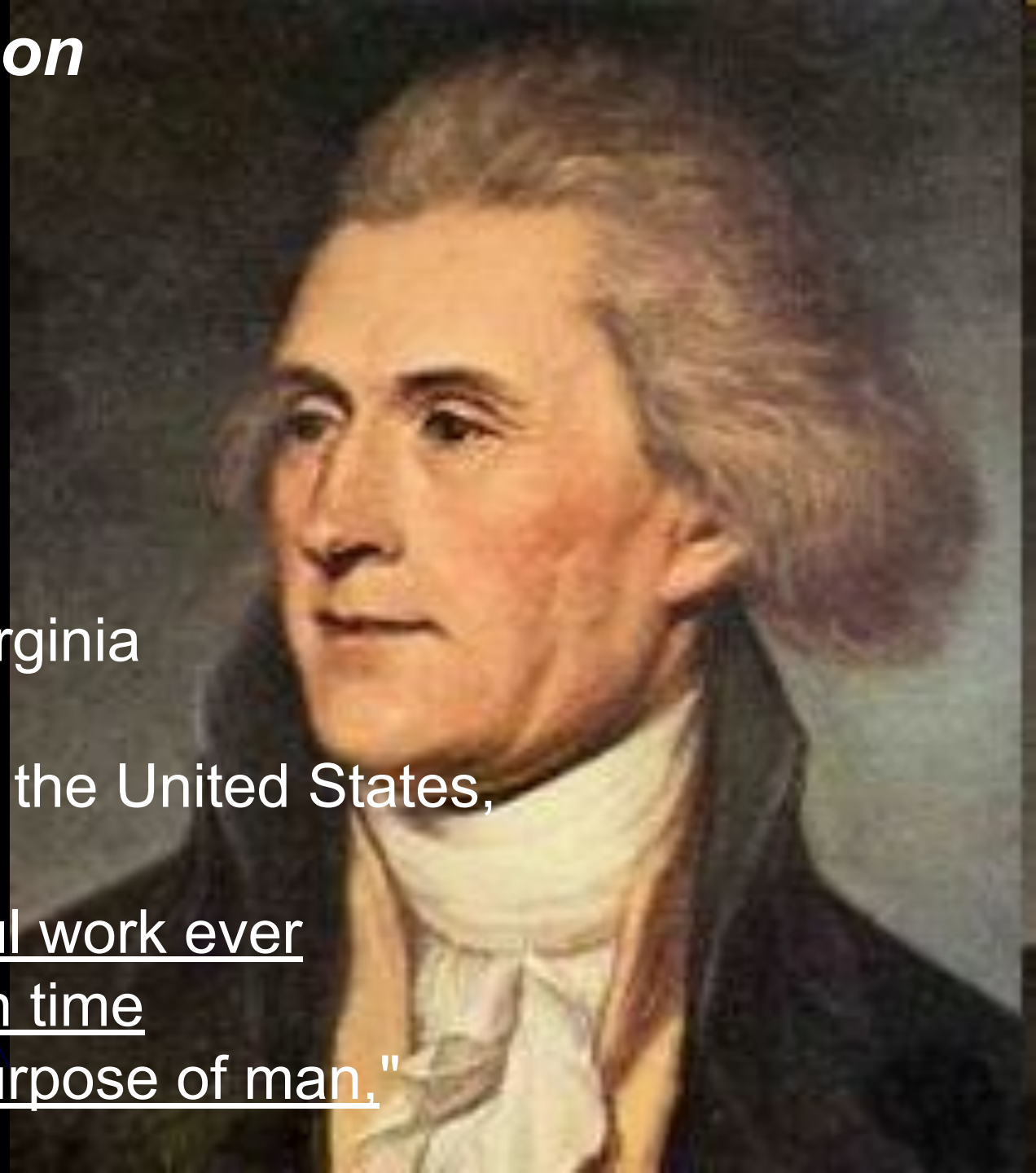
- On May 10, 1776, the Second Continental Congress called for disunion.
 - Jefferson's work, *The Declaration of Independence* announced the birth of a new nation on July 4, 1776, and set forth a road to American freedom.
- 

Thomas Jefferson

(1743-1826)

published
Notes on Virginia,
wrote a compact
Autobiography,
founded
the University of Virginia

The Constitution of the United States,
adopted in 1788,
"the most wonderful work ever
struck off at a given time
by the brain and purpose of man,"



- The Revolution created national heroes
- *The Ballad of Nathan Hale* tells of a capture and hanging of an American spy, sent by George Washington to find out the British army's route.
- *"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."*

Yankee Doodle

Yankee Doodle came to town
Upon a little pony,
He stuck a feather in his hat
And called it macaroni.

Yankee Doodle keep it up,
Yankee Doodle dandy,
Mind the music and the step,
And with the girls be handy.

And there was Captain Washington,
Upon a slapping stallion,
And giving orders to his men,
I guess there was a million .

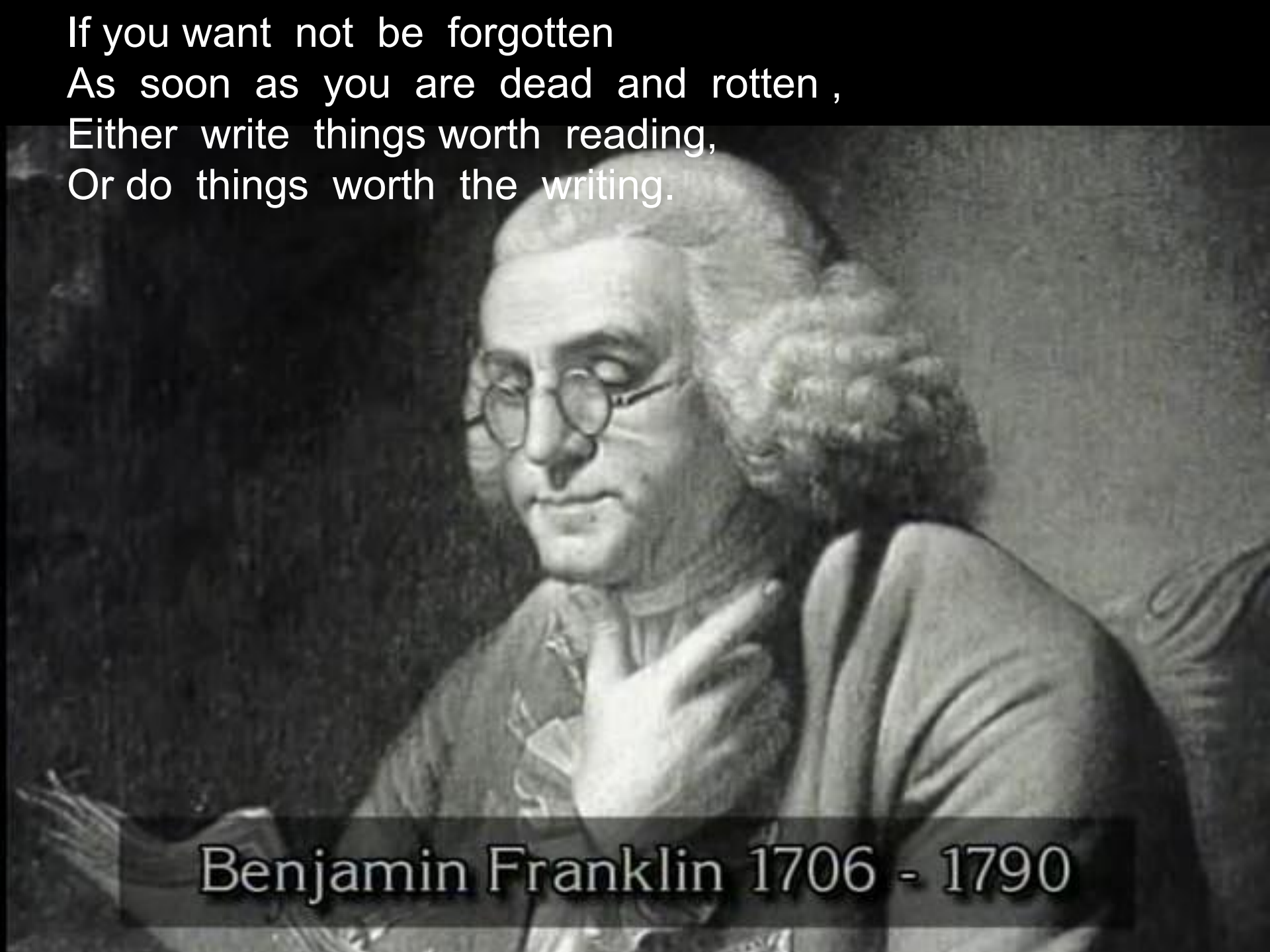
And then they had a swamping gun,
As big as a log of maple,
On a deuced little cart,
A load for father's cattle .

And there they'd fife away like fun
And play on cornstalk fiddles
And some had ribbons red as blood
All bound around their middles.

The troopers, too, would gallop up
And fire right in our faces
It scared me almost to death
To see them run such races.

- theatre showed a nationalistic character in its first comedy, *The Contrast* (1787) by Royal Tyler.
- the first American novel *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) by W. H. Brown
- Gothic romance *Wieland* (1799) by the first professional American novelist Charles Brockden Brown
- political writings were the most popular - Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison
- the
- leading literary genres - travel and religious narratives, political tracts, poetry and essays

If you want not be forgotten
As soon as you are dead and rotten ,
Either write things worth reading,
Or do things worth the writing.



Benjamin Franklin 1706 - 1790

Self-made man

- the American giant of the 18th c.
- born in Boston, in 1706. His father was a soap-boiler and candle-maker
- the fifteenth in a family of seventeen children
- worked in the shop cutting wicks for the candles, and running errands
- was apprenticed to his brother James, who owned a printing business
- In 1721, James Franklin began to publish a newspaper, ***The New England Courant***, one of the first in the colonies – Ben wrote the papers in a disguised hand, signed with the pen-name ***Silence Dogood***
- when seventeen, Ben ran away to New York and then to Philadelphia

- worked at the printing-shop
- spent eighteen months in London
- back in Philadelphia developed a profitable business and in 1729 purchased a newspaper, ***The Pennsylvania Gazette***
- wrote a series of humorous and satirical sketches, which he called ***The Busy Body papers***
- His early years consisted of establishing himself as printer, then journalist and writer. From 1732 to 1757 he wrote *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the first American periodical and source of proverbs that is still a bestseller even today.

Poor Richard, 1733.

A N

Almanack

For the Year of Christ


1733,

Being the First after LEAP YEAR:

And makes since the Creation

Years

Poor Richard's Almanac - the maxims of the world

- *Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.*
 - *Most fools think they are only ignorant.*
 - *Honesty is the best policy.*
 - *A penny saved is a penny earned.*
 - *Fish and visitors smell in three days.*
 - *Love thy neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.*
- 

PRIVATE LIFE

OF THE LATE

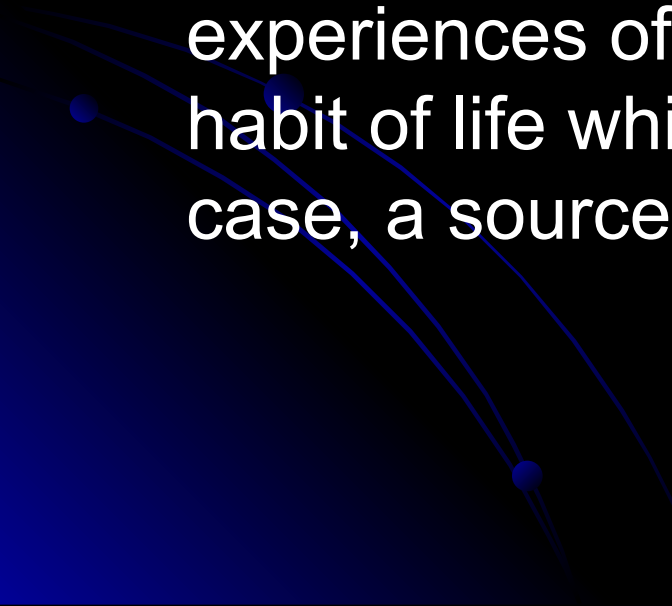
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, LL.D.

LATE MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY FROM THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA TO FRANCE, &c. &c. &c.

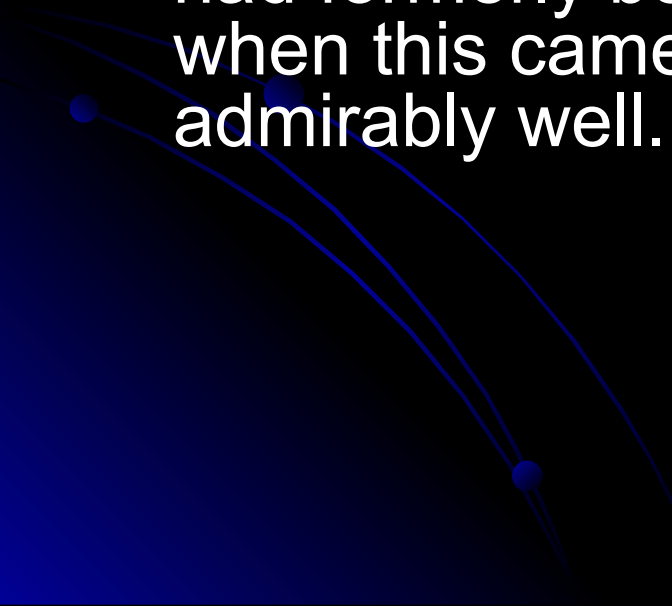
Originally written by Himself,

AND NOW TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

Autobiography


- *Autobiography* is properly regarded as Franklin's most significant literary achievement
 - he began to write it in 1771, resumed in 1788, and left incomplete at his death
 - The purpose of its author was to make the experiences of his own career, the conduct and habit of life which had led to success in his own case, a source of help and inspiration to others.
- 

In my first voyage from Boston, being becalm'd off Block Island, our people set about catching cod, and hauled up a great many. Hitherto I had stuck to my resolution of not eating animal food, and on this occasion consider'd, with my master Tryon, the taking every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had, or ever could do us any injury that might justify the slaughter. All this seemed very reasonable. But I had formerly been a great lover of fish, and, when this came hot out of the frying-pan, it smelt admirably well. mind to do.



I balanc'd some time between principle and inclination, till I recollected that, when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then thought I, "If you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you." So I din'd upon cod very heartily, and continued to eat with other people, returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable diet.

So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do.



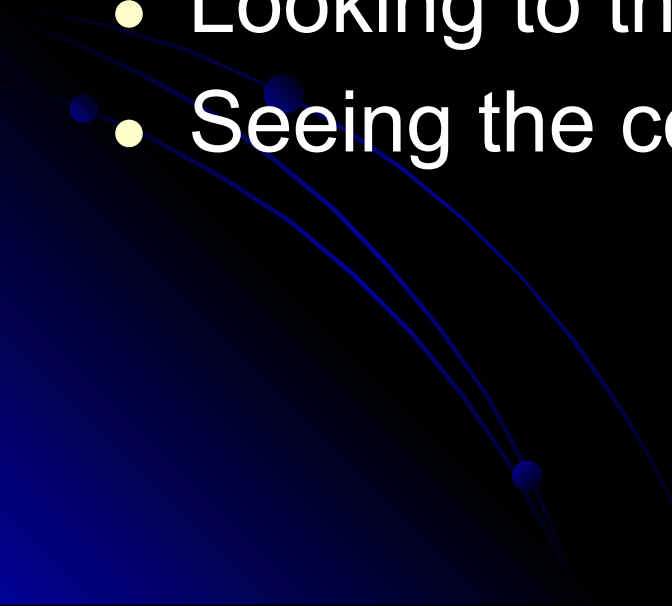
American Romantic Literature 1830-1870



American Romantic Literature

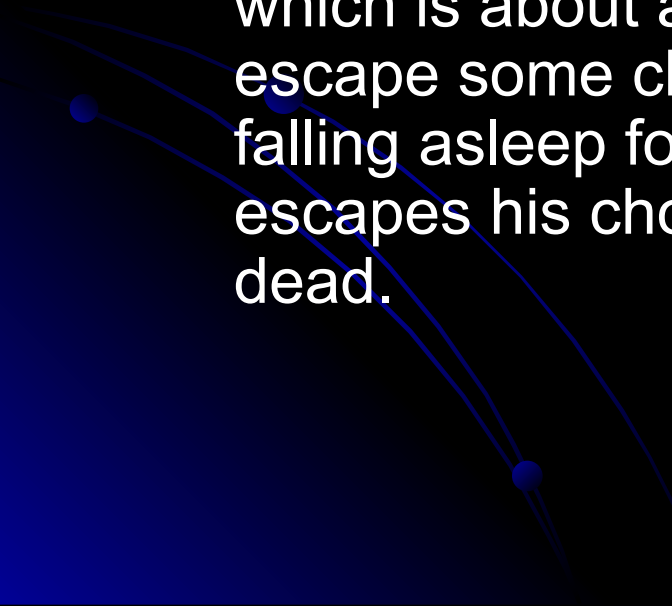
- a time of rapid expansion and growth in the United States that fueled intuition, imagination, and individualism in literature
- the American Romantic movement challenged the very rational thinking of the Age of Reason during the Revolutionary War. This period produced fewer instructional texts and more stories, novels, and poetry.

five characteristics to identify American Romantic literature.

- Imagination
 - Individuality
 - Nature as a source of spirituality
 - Looking to the past for wisdom
 - Seeing the common man as a hero
- 

Imagination

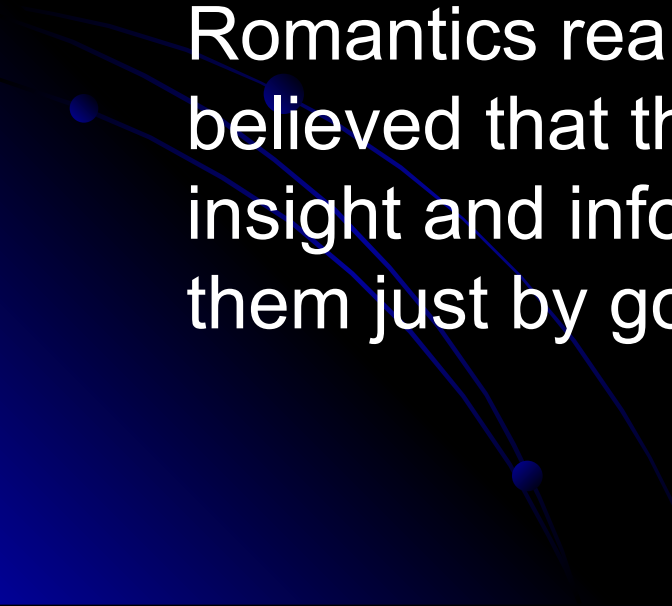
- Industrial Revolution - a great time of progress - there is progress, there is also great optimism - imagine what could happen next
- a lot of people began migrating to big cities that were becoming overpopulated, dirty and disease-ridden. Many people wanted to escape that. Therefore, the American Romantic writers embrace that notion through **escapism**.
- **Escapism** is where the mind allows you to escape harsh conditions by taking you to a place that is purely beautiful.

- Characters in Romantic literature are often journeying away from the city and into the countryside to a place that's not totally realistic, a place that has improbable and even supernatural qualities.
 - The authors develop these places with **imagery** to make the reader experience the locale as if it were real.
 - **Washington Irving**, who's known as the father of American literature, wrote a story called 'Rip Van Winkle,' which is about a man who wanders out into the woods to escape some chores his wife is asking him to do. After falling asleep for twenty years in the woods, he not only escapes his chores but his wife as well because she's dead.
- 

Individuality

- **Immigration** begins creating what is now called the 'melting pot' in America – people are creating an identity for themselves, but the country is creating its own identity as people with different social pasts come together to create something new.
- Americans also wanted to distance themselves from Europe and become intellectually independent, they follow their intuition and their feeling, and they're going to embrace this newly found freedom and become individuals.

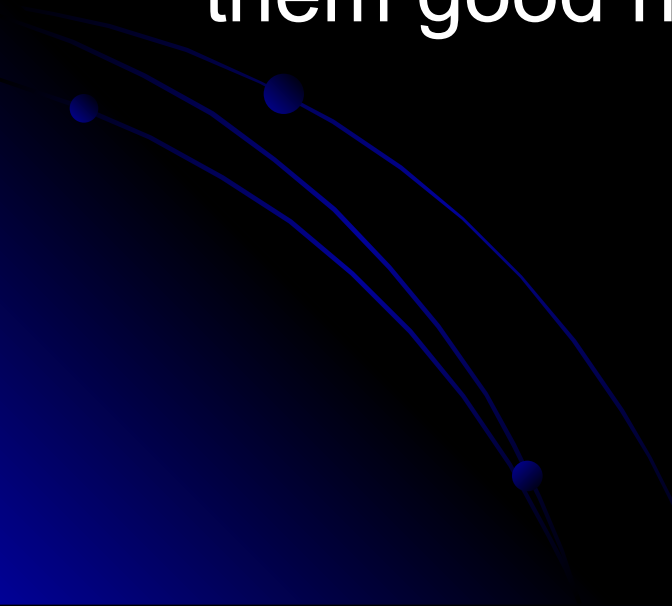
Nature As A Source Of Spirituality

- Romantics wanted to embrace that spiritual root that was planted by the Puritans
 - But
 - where the Puritans saw nature as savage, with the Devil hiding behind every tree, the Romantics really are finding God in nature. They believed that they could achieve high levels of insight and information about the world around them just by going to nature.
- 

Wisdom From The Past

- Writers used old legends to create new stories.
- Whereas the novelists and short story writers tried to distance themselves from European tradition in writing, the poets stuck to that tradition. They are truly unique in their content in that they are looking at the pure American nature and are using that for their inspiration.
- **Fireside Poets:** Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and James Russel Lowell.

Common Man As A Hero

- Prior to this time, the European hero had been established as sophisticated and educated/Ben Franklin
 - Now - characters who are flawed but whose innocence and strong morals give them good hearts/ Indiana Jones .
- 

Summary

- **Imagination and Escapism**: Characters taking a journey from the dirty city into the supernatural countryside.
- **Individuality**: Individuals embracing freedom by following intuition and going exploring.
- **Finding spirituality in nature**: Reflections on nature and how it can bring people closer to God.
- **Looking to the past for wisdom**: Settings that reflect times past and plots that show how legends fit in today.
- **Finding a hero in the common man**: Characters who are flawed but whose innocence and strong morals give them good hearts.