

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters

Roots of Democracy

Founding Narratives: The Evolution of Ancient Athenian
and Early American Democracy

March 3, 2021

CLOWES: Good evening. Welcome to Founding Narratives, the second in our four sessions for the Roots of Democracy series. I'm Jody Clowes, the director of the James Watrous Gallery at the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters. And I want to give a special welcome to those of you who may be new to the academy tonight. We believe that ideas move the world forward. And since 1870, we've been creating opportunities for people to connect with experts and learn from each other.

The Madison office of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters occupies ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place their nation knows as Dejope, which translates to four lakes. We recognize and respect the sovereignty of the Ho-Chunk Nation, as well as the 11 other First Nations who are caretakers and stewards of the land we now call Wisconsin.

The Roots of Democracy series is sponsored in part by Wisconsin Humanities, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the state of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Public Radio, the D.B. Reinhart Center for Ethics in Leadership at Viterbo College, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Center for the Study of the American Constitution at UW-Madison, and we're lucky to have John Kaminski from the center here with us tonight, and the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

So to begin, Roots of Democracy is an exploration of the cultural and philosophical roots of American democracy. And tonight's presentation will focus on classical Greek and Roman democracy and Enlightenment thoughts, a lot to pack into an hour and a half, and the relationship of those systems to the American Constitution.

So to introduce our presenters, we're very honored to have with us Adriana Brook, who has taught widely across the classics curriculum with courses on ancient epic, tragedy and comedy, Greco-Roman history and culture, theories of myths, and ancient sexualities. Adriana obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in 2014. And her first book, *Tragic Rites: Narrative and Ritual in Sophoclean Tragedy*, was published in 2018. She continues to teach at the undergraduate level and is currently pursuing her Master's of Education at Brock University.

And as I mentioned earlier, we welcome tonight also John Kaminski, who founded and still directs the Center for the Study of the American Constitution, which is in the Department of History at UW-Madison. And John has co-edited 35 volumes of *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* and has written, edited, or co-edited 30 other books on the Revolutionary area, era. He is deeply committed to

teacher and judicial education and regularly participates in seminars for these two groups of professionals throughout the country. So we're very lucky to have both of them with us tonight. And I want to turn the podium over to Adriana right now.

BROOK: Hi, everybody. Let me just share my screen with you. I am absolutely delighted to be here tonight. And I just want to add to the land acknowledgement earlier that I'm actually Zooming in from Canada. And I'm located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Mississauga on land that's protected by the Dish With One Spoon wampum covenant.

So I'm here to talk to you about ancient Athenian democracy. And I'd like to start with a question, which is what do you think of when you think of Athenian democracy? And you might have some images that pop into your mind. You might have some ideas about what that political system looked like. You might be thinking of some ancient authors. But I'd just love it if everybody could take a minute. And I'm just going to give us five or ten seconds of silence just to call something to mind, to tap into what you might already know about this topic.

All right. So I'm imagining that for many people, what came into your mind was some version of this. We've got classical architecture. We've got people in robes making speeches. We've got a bunch of citizens all gathered together. And this is definitely one element of what we can think of when we think of Athenian democracy. And in some senses, I feel like this is our shared cultural understanding of what ancient Athenian democracy is.

But what I want to try to do tonight is to complicate that a little bit for you so to both sort of affirm this, you know, image that I've got up on the screen, but also to give you some questions to ask that might sort of undermine what we see here. And I think this is important for a couple of reasons, first of all, because I think so often, we say to ourselves, you know, the Athenians invented democracy. And while that's true in one sense, I think it's much more accurate to say they invented a version of democracy. And we are constantly reinventing democracy, and we get to think about that in any way that we want to.

The other thing is that I think by sort of delving into some of the complexities and nuances of Athenian democracy, this can be a good way to get into the conversation about the complexities and nuances of American democracy. And so what I'm going to try and do is sort of tee things up for my colleague, John, in much the same way that the Greeks and the Romans sort of provided food for thought when the founding fathers were trying to figure out what they would make of this new nation.

So in the next half an hour or so, I'm going to proceed in sort of three large steps. Part one, I'm going to try to complicate Athenian democracy for you by showing that it's both much more radical and inclusive than you might think, but also that it's much more conservative and exclusionary than you might think. The second part of this talk is really just going to be thinking about like, why democracy, and what did that mean for Athens? Why did they choose this form of government for themselves, and then what were the consequences of that both good and bad?

And then finally, the third part, I'm going to turn to my corner of the classics field, which is the theater, and think about what theater did for the Athenians as a space to kind of reflect on these complexities and nuances themselves in their own time. And I

think that this is a really nice way to start thinking about how we want to reflect on democracy in our own time, starting with seminars like this. But where do we want to go from here?

So moving on to part one, and I'm just going to sort of remind you periodically that you're very welcome to type questions into the Q&A. I will see those at the end, and we'll have time for question and answer then. But you can absolutely type them in now as they occur to you.

Okay. So here we go. This is sort of the positive side of the coin, inclusive, radical Athenian democracy. And I think the most important thing is that it was just so much more participatory than we think of democracy today. In American democracy, right, we elect officials who then basically do everything on our behalf. They're not consulting us on every little decision. But the Athenians truly wanted to consult every single citizen on every single decision as much as possible.

So if they were making a major decision in the assembly, the minimum number of people who had to be involved for it to be legitimate was 6,000. Similarly, in the criminal justice system, we think of a jury of 12 of your peers. For the Athenians, the lower end is juries of 100 people. And for really serious high-profile trials, it was more like 2,000 people. That's the biggest jury that we know of.

And then finally, we have the council. This is made up of members of the geographically based tribes of Athens. This was a council of 500, and there were 50 people from each of the tribes. And you could only serve on this council twice in your lifetime, which meant that just because of the size of Athens population, basically every citizen would, at some point, serve on the council, directly participate in setting the agenda for the assembly.

And what all of this reflects, this mass participation, and I think this is maybe the core idea that you can take away about ancient Athenian democracy, is that the founding assumption is that consulting as many people as possible, sort of tapping into the collective wisdom of the demos, which is the people, and that's from the root that democracy comes from, that this was the best way to make decisions. That you couldn't leave decisions in the hands of just a few people because they didn't have access to the knowledge of the entire citizenry. So it's a really different way, I think, of sort of conceptualizing the political process.

The second thing that I think is pretty astonishing about Athenian democracy is that they didn't just talk the talk. They actually facilitated people being part of this participatory process. So if you were on that council, you lived, and you ate for free while you were doing that civic service. And then eventually, they introduced wages for that duty as well.

By the mid-fifth century, if you were serving on a jury, you were getting paid a day wage to do that. And by the end of the fifth century, you were getting paid to attend the assembly. So this is, I think, really a testament to how much the Athenians valued participation, that they actually put their money into that aspect of running the government.

Sortition and rotation, this is the part that really shocked me when I learned about it for the first time. Sortition basically means that when there were offices run by individual people, it just wasn't practical to consult literally everybody on literally every decision. Those offices were assigned essentially at random, so pull a name out of a

hat. You're the hardware master this year. You're the tax collector this year. You're in charge of festivals for this year. It was assumed that every citizen was equally capable of filling every job or almost every job. We'll talk about that in a second. And then rotation, no citizen was to monopolize any of these offices.

So every year, there was a renewal. Fresh people in these jobs getting fresh perspectives to, sort of from a slightly different angle, get the collective wisdom of the demos involved. And then finally, this was a system that was in some ways a redistributive economy. So if you were a wealthy citizen of Athens, one of the things that was expected of you as part of your citizenship was to pay money to subsidize the happenings within the city.

So it might be contributing a ship to the navy. It might be repairing part of the city walls. It might be funding a play for the festival. But this was something that was absolutely expected and in a lot of ways enforced through the judicial system. You couldn't really say no to this kind of thing because it was believed that this was a sort of obligation of democratic citizenship.

So that's one side of the coin. We're now going to talk about the other side of the coin. And this is the part that I think we don't necessarily always call to mind when we're thinking about the example of ancient Athenian democracy. So the first thing that I'm sure many of you will already have thought of is that one of the reasons why Athens can be so radically inclusive and consult everybody is because the definition of everybody is extremely narrow.

So you have to be an adult male Athenian citizen to partake in any of that stuff that I just talked about. And if you're a woman, you have absolutely no role in politics. If you are not from Greece, there is no path to citizenship for you in Athens. And that even goes from people who are Greeks but not from Athens. You could certainly come to Athens and be a businessman. You could pay taxes to sort of operate your business within the city limits. But you never had a vote, and you never were able to speak for yourself in court. You had to get an Athenian citizen to do that for you.

And then, of course, we can't forget that Athens was a slave-owning society, and that a lot of their economic stability relied on the owning of slaves. But I think the other thing that needs to be pointed out is that it's not just people who are officially excluded because they don't have citizenship. This is a system that also by its very setup excluded even some people who were citizens. So, for example, if you're a farmer, you're not going to attend the assembly during the harvest, and your voice is not going to be counted.

Similarly, if you don't live in the city, you're unlikely to make a day's journey, or sometimes a two-day journey, to get to where you need to be to participate in the political process. If you're sick, if you're infirm, if you have a disability, if you can't get to the courtroom, you can't sit on a jury. It's as simple as that. And then for a long time, before wages were introduced at all these different levels of government, if you were a day laborer, you couldn't afford to take a day off of work to go and participate in democracy, which really skews things in favor of the rich.

And we can expand on this idea of favoring the rich within Athenian democracy. There were lots of ways in which people who had aristocratic connections or people who were well-educated really thrived. So if you were rich, you had the leisure to be

very involved in politics. You could, in a sense, make that your job because you just had income from your lands. You didn't really have to work.

Similarly, because so much of the way that Athens functions is based on persuasive speech, right, so you get up in front of the assembly and make a speech, and then people vote. Or you get up in front of a jury and make a speech, and then they vote. If you were wealthy, that meant that you were educated in rhetoric. And so you had a huge advantage over people without that education in terms of actually managing to persuade people to follow along with you.

And then, if you had aristocratic connections, you were much more likely to end up in the only office that was not elected, that of general. And, I mean, in a lot of ways, it makes sense, right? Like don't pick your general's name out of a hat because you might end up regretting that decision.

But what this meant is that this was sort of a loophole in the system where people were able to sort of maintain a position of power and maintain their influence for very long periods of time. You may have heard of the politician, Pericles. He was elected general almost every year for 30 years in a row, which gave him a hugely outsized influence on Athenian politics compared to somebody from a non-aristocratic background.

So that is, I don't know, maybe some Athenian democratic myth-busting for you, or at least just to sort of remind you that there are two sides to this coin. And so if you have questions, you're welcome to put those into the Q&A box now. But I'm going to be moving on to part two, which is, why democracy? Why did Athens go in that direction and what were the consequences?

And there are really two reasons why Athens went in this direction, and the first happens early in the sixth century. And so that's about 150 years before what we typically are thinking of when we think of classical Athenian democracy. And we're focusing on a politician called Solon who sees this problem in Athens and fixes it and pushes Athens in the direction of what will eventually become their radical democracy.

So in this period, the aristocrats had a monopoly on land. And basically, if you were not a land-owning aristocrat, you were a tenant farmer. And so you would have to pay your landlord in a portion of your harvest. And so this is basically, you know, ancient Athenian sharecropping. And what would happen is that people would not be able to meet their obligations. And the only way that they could pay these debts was by either themselves entering into slavery, or someone in their family, a child, a sibling, would end up becoming a slave of the landowner aristocrat.

And so there was this huge crisis where there was this immense wealth imbalance that was only getting the, you know, the gap between rich and poor was only getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And so Solon comes up with a solution that made nobody happy, and so ultimately it was a good compromise. First of all, he cancels literally all debt. If you owe anything to your landlord, now you owe them nothing. And he made debt slavery illegal. Athenians could not enslave other Athenians after this.

But he didn't redistribute the land. The aristocrats held onto the lands that they already owned. What's really crucial here, and why this leads to democracy, is that as part of this sort of reorganization, Solon created new property-based classes that were used to determine at what level you could participate in politics. And for the very first time, even those who didn't own land were allowed to vote in the assembly. So your

franchise didn't depend on land ownership. And this was really the first seed that eventually blossomed into what would become democracy.

What pushed Athens over the line, I think, has lots of interesting parallels with what we see in the case of America, and this is in response to a tyrant. Now the original tyrant, who is not represented on this slide, is a guy called Pisistratus. And it's important to remember that tyrant doesn't necessarily mean like evil dictator in the way that we often use it in today.

But tyrant just meant somebody who comes to power atypically. So Pisistratus seizes power in Athens, but he's actually a really great leader for the Athenians. He pours money into the economy. He creates jobs. He funds the arts. He builds temples. He founds festivals. He's doing all these wonderful things for Athens.

But when he dies, his two sons, Hippias and Hipparchus, do turn into that sort of stereotypical, you know, evil tyrant-type figure. One of them gets into a sex scandal and ends up being assassinated, and the other one is expelled and sent to Persia. And in the sort of power vacuum that's left in the absence of these two tyrants, a politician called Cleisthenes basically seizes the opportunity and puts in place what evolves into the version of Athenian democracy that we know and study today.

So the first question that we want to ask is, why was this a good thing for Athens? And there's so much that we could say here, but I'm just going to focus on one aspect, which is that it really solidifies Athens as a naval power in Greece. And you might be thinking, that makes no sense. Why are democracy and the navy connected? And I'm going to try and tell you that story.

So at the beginning of the fifth century, we are now a full century later than Solon, the Persian empire turns its attention westward, and it invades Greece. And if you are looking at this from any objective angle, it seems clear that Greece is going to have to be absolutely defeated because the Persian Empire is vast and wealthy, and the Greeks are just this teeny, little collection of city-states. But what happens is that the Greeks are able to muster a sort of organized and very strategic fighting force that's able to counter the Persians who are very big and sprawling and disorganized.

The Spartans, who have traditionally been the power in Greece up to this point, they really lead the way with the army. They have a hoplite army. They're very powerful. But the Athenians decide to put their resources into building a navy. And what you can see on the screen here, this is a reconstruction of an ancient type of ship called the trireme. And the tri here refers to the fact that there are three banks of oars. And so you have tons and tons of people rowing below decks. And that makes these ships both very fast and very maneuverable, and they're really easily able to outmaneuver the sort of slow-moving, lumbering Persian fleet.

And in particular, this is a diagram of the Battle of Salamis, maybe the quintessential Athenian victory in this war against Persia. And you don't really need to know much about naval tactics. All you need to know is that the blue figures, which are the Greeks, lure the red figures, which are the Persian forces, into this narrow channel between the island of Salamis and the mainland where Athens is. And because it's this very narrow space, the Persians don't have the advantage of their numbers. And the Greeks are able to prevail.

But if we go back to the trireme for a second, the connection with democracy is very much tied to these oarsmen. Because up until this point, if you were going to be

involved in the army, it was really a case of, you know, if you were in the cavalry, you have to be able to afford a horse. If you were in the army, you had to be able to afford your shield and your greaves and that kind of thing. But if you needed to be a rower, you didn't need much training. You didn't need any fancy equipment. And yet, Athens' success in the Persian Wars was built on you.

And so this gave these sort of poorer classes who were filling these rowing benches a lot of political clout. They were able to clamor for more representation. And eventually, this sort of snowballs into a much more radical version of democracy where the lowest classes are participating more and more and more on the strength of the contributions that they've made in the navy.

The other thing that needs to be mentioned is that coming out of the Persian Wars, the Athenians, because of their position as the head of the strongest and the largest navy in Greece, they become the head of the so-called Delian League, which is this sort of alliance of coastal cities in Greece who all agree to band together if Persia should ever come back.

And there is a whole story with the Delian League. It goes sour very quickly. Please ask me about that in the Q&A if you're interested. It's a very good story. But really, all that I want to say is that through the trireme, through the contribution of these rowers, Athens had all of a sudden become a mega power in Greece. And they were on a level with Sparta sort of creating tension that would eventually lead to war, but at least for the moment really put Athens in this hugely advantageous position, which then makes them double down on the democracy that got them here in the first place. So that's the good story.

How does democracy cause Athens problems? Again, many ways to answer this. But I'm just going to focus on the issue of the demagogue. So remember that I said before that really, the way that Athens runs is on persuasive speech. You get up in front of a crowd, and you make a speech. And if people like it, then that's what, you know, the city is going to do. And so over time, what happens is that people's ability to persuade gets better and better and better. But what they're persuading Athens of is not always necessarily the best policy.

So one example of this that I can share with you is the so-called Mytilenean Debate. And this arises when one of Athens' so-called allies in the Delian League decides that they want out, and they revolt from the Delian League. And Athens decides to be very punitive. They send a ship. They're going to burn the city to the ground, kill all the men, and enslave all the women and children.

But the next day, the Athenians have second thoughts, and they hold another assembly to revisit their decision. And two politicians get up, Cleon, who is a smooth-talking, rabble-rousing, violence-loving politician, and he tries to persuade the Athenians to stay the course and be vicious. And then this other guy, Diodotus, gets up, and he says, we need to reconsider. We need to think about our relationship with our allies. It's best for Athens in the long run if we don't take the most extreme course, if we show mercy to the Mytileneans.

And the Athenians ultimately go with him, and that's probably a good thing. And in some senses, this is a strength of Athenian democracy, that it can correct its own perceived mistakes by this deliberative process. But it also shines a light on the fact that the Athenian citizenry can really be swayed by a flashy speaker, that they can be

sort of tempted into what's not best for the city of Athens because of a particularly charismatic or energetic or persuasive speaker who may have his own popularity at heart and not necessarily what's best for the city.

And I think the best example of this problem with demagogues really bringing Athens low is best represented by the so-called Sicilian Expedition. So this happens maybe, oh, about ten years before the end of the Peloponnesian War. And at this point, Athens and Sparta have a sort of shaky peace treaty. They're trying not to fight with each other anymore. And the little city of Segesta, which you can see on the left side of the island of Sicily, asked Athens for help in this fight that they're having with Syrakus, which is on the right side of the island of Sicily.

And if Athens does this, they will be breaking the peace treaty with Sparta. But if Athens does this, they will gain new territory. They're going to get all this timber and grain from Sicily. And in a very similar situation to the Mytilenean Debate, two politicians get up. But this time, the glib charismatic demagogue wins, convinces Athens to massively overcommit, sending almost their entire fleet, almost their entire fighting force to Sicily, and they lose badly. Most of their ships are destroyed. Most of their men are either killed or captured.

And Athens tries to get back on its feet after this disastrous defeat, but they never really manage to do it. And just a few years later, they end up losing this war that they're having with Sparta. So in this case, the demagogues did not lead to the best situation. And the sort of connection between democratic participation, right, seeking the collective wisdom of the demos, it wasn't working in the way that it should. Demagogues were sort of able to circumvent that wisdom-collecting process and leading to a much more spontaneous and ill-advised approach to policy decisions.

Okay. So now, we are moving on to part three. And this is where we're going to be talking about the connection between theater and democracy. And what you're seeing here, this is a photo of what the Theatre of Dionysus looks like today. You'll notice it's made of stone. It wouldn't have been in the time period that we're talking about. It would have been made of wood at that point.

But what I really want to highlight for you is that this theater is right in the heart of Athens. You can see that it's on the slope of the Acropolis. It's right beside the Parthenon. The theater is very much in the center of the city and that that is no mistake. Theater was very much bound up with Athens' sense of itself as a democracy and Athens' sense of itself as a city.

And I think the evidence for this is that, eventually, over time, Athens even began to pay people for theater attendance in the same way that they paid people to attend a jury or to attend an assembly. This idea that somehow going to the theater was doing your democratic duty. And I think the reason for this is because the experience of sitting in the audience, in a big crowd of people, watching somebody trying to persuade you to be on their side on the stage is a perfect analogy for what's happening in all of these other contexts. It's persuasive speech, and you, as the collective, as the demos, are asked to judge it.

But the thing about the theater is that the stakes are low. You can judge what's happening on stage, and you can be right, or you can be wrong. But by the time the play is over, everything goes back to the way it was, right? It's just a thought experiment. And so I think that it's really interesting to reflect on what the Athenians

might have been thinking about in this context, why we can think of theater as such a rich site for interrogating democracy for the Athenians and then maybe also for us as well.

So I want to give you an example, and that means that I need to tell you a little bit of mythical backstory. And this is a myth that might be familiar to some of you. So we're starting at the beginning of the Trojan War. And the Greek king, Agamemnon, is supposed to lead the Greek forces to go and fight the trojans. The problem is there are no winds. The goddess, Artemis, is holding back the winds so that the Greeks can't go anywhere. And ultimately, Agamemnon is convinced that he has to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to appease the gods and get the winds back again, which he does.

When he gets home ten years later, his wife, Clytemnestra, who has been nursing an understandable grudge for all this time, murders Agamemnon and the mistress that he brings home with him. But then, Clytemnestra and Agamemnon's son, Orestes, takes vengeance against his mother for what was done to his father, and he kills her. And then, because there's nobody left to take vengeance, he is tormented by the Furies, these goddesses of vengeance and retribution.

So what we get here is a kind of classic Greek myth where it seems like the cycle of vengeance is never going to end. There is no way to stop this cyclical back and forth, eye for an eye. The family is doomed to repeat its mistakes over and over and over again. And so I want to tell you about a couple of plays that look at this myth, and I want to show you how they deal with this mythical moment very differently.

So we're going to start first with a play by the playwright Aeschylus called *The Eumenides*. And it's from 458 BCE, which is a period when Athens is doing well. Its democracy is flourishing. It's powerful in Greece. Sure, it's got some enemies, but it's got it under control. And so this play starts off with the tail end of the story I just told you, with Orestes being tormented by the Furies. And what happens here, and I think this is so fascinating, the way to end this problem of vengeance is basically democratic institutions.

So the goddess Athena shows up, and she sees that there are these two sides who have a very good claim to justice. Orestes, you know, he was told by the god, Apollo, to kill his mother, and he was taking vengeance for his father. That's a really good argument. On the other hand, the Furies, their whole divine purpose is to seek vengeance. And, you know, nobody is taking vengeance for Clytemnestra.

And so here's what Athena says. She says, two options, each of them disastrous. Allow one to remain, expel the other? No. I see no way of resolving this. But since the judgment now devolves on me, I'll appoint human judges of this murder, a tribunal bound by oath. I'll set it up to last forever.

So basically, Athena says, we've got this problem. A murder trial is the answer. We're going to take this to court, and we are going to find a solution to this once and for all, which I think speaks very strongly to the faith that the Athenians had in their institutions. That they could take something as messed up as Agamemnon and Clytemnestra and Orestes and say, yeah, we could deal with that. We would just put them through our system, and the collective wisdom of the demos would sort it out.

Now we're going to jump ahead 50 years to a play by Euripides. It's called, *The Orestes*, and it tells exactly the same story. It picks up at exactly the same point with Orestes being tormented by the Furies after having killed his mother. The images you

can see on your screen are from a modern production of the play. And this setting of the play, it really gets at how disturbed and chaotic and just messy this story is. This is not a neat story of, you know, now the justice system is going to figure this out for us. This is a story that says, we do not have the ability to solve a problem this big.

Because what happens is Orestes and his sister, Electra, they end up in the city of Argos, and the Argives are trying to decide what to do with them. And they hold an assembly to try to figure out what's to be done with the siblings. And the parts that I'm going to read for you, this is the, when a messenger comes to tell the sister, Electra, what has transpired in this assembly. And so as I'm reading this, I'd like you to just think if you hear any echoes of things that we have talked about so far today.

So first of all, the messenger tells us about Talthybius. Talthybius spoke ambiguously. Well, he's always been a subordinate of those in power, praising your father, that is Agamemnon, but saying nothing good about your brother, Orestes, weaving good and misleading words together. And all the time, he kept looking at Aegisthus's friends with those bright eyes of his. The herald tribe is like that, they're always jumping over to the side of the successful. Any man who has ruling power in the city is a friend of theirs.

So maybe not a perfect democracy in which everybody is honestly contributing to this, you know, wisdom-collecting process, but here's another excerpt. And this one is almost more confusing because it shows that it's sort of not, it's not all lost yet, right? There's still hope.

Another man stood up opposing him. He wasn't much to look at physically, but the man had courage. He rarely came into the city and the marketplace. He was a farmer. They're the only ones who keep our country going, but clever and keen to wrestle with the argument. Someone with integrity who lived a life beyond reproach. He said they should crown Orestes, Agamemnon's son, who wished to avenge his father who had been murdered by an abominable, godless woman. What he said appeared convincing, at least to decent folk.

So we have this real tension. We want to believe in the ability of democratic institutions to solve problems. But we see that those institutions are susceptible to corruption. And the herald, the messenger, really sums this up for us. When a man with bad intentions but a pleasing style persuades a mob, that's a great disaster for the city. But those who always give useful, sound advice, even if their words are not immediately appropriate, are beneficial later to the state. So a play that I think is really calling democracy into question.

Imagine sitting in the audience. This is in 408. This is after the Sicilian Expedition has happened. Athens is really staring down imminent defeat in this war that it's been fighting with Sparta for more than 20 years. And this is what Euripides puts in front of them, do you think democracy is up to solving our problems? And you as the audience member have to make that decision.

All right. This is the last quote. And it's a doozy because we're going back to Aeschylus now. We're jumping back in time 50 years. And this play that I earlier presented to you as being very confident in democracy's ability to solve complex problems is maybe not quite as confident as I originally suggested. Because the way that things work out, Athena does put this very tricky problem before a jury. But ultimately, the trial ends with the hung jury.

So what happens is the democratic institution actually fails to serve the purpose that it was intended to serve, and Athena ends up making the final decision. She says, it's now my task to give my final verdict. And I award my ballot to Orestes. If the votes are equal, Orestes wins. So even in this time of confidence and strength for Athens, they're still using the theater as a place to reflect on their own institutions.

And while the play does express confidence in this sort of judicial system, in the end, they put their faith in the gods. It's Athena who has to step in and solve this problem for them. And it's interesting to think about what that would mean to an audience member listening to this in 458. So that is me at the end of my presentation. That's what we've looked at so far tonight. I'm really looking forward to taking your questions a little bit later on. But for now, I am going to un-share my screen and pass you over to my colleague.

CLOWES: So, John Kaminski, we welcome you to the stage. Thank you so much, Adriana. That was wonderful.

KAMINSKI: It's great to be here and talk about the founding fathers and the starting of the American system of government. George Washington wrote his last circular letter to the states in June of 1783. The war was practically over. The treaty writing was not yet finished, but that was almost completed as well. And this letter becomes really a very important piece of political inspiration. Washington talks about what was necessary to make America great. It had just won its independence. But what would happen in the future?

He said that it was fortuitous that America as a country came about at this particular time when we had gotten tremendous sources of information from scholars and political writers and thinkers for many, many years. It was that foundation that Washington said would be built upon to create the American government in replace of the British Empire that we had.

And so he was looking at the Enlightenment, talking about how important the Enlightenment was. And the works that he was talking about that could be drawn upon were the Bible, the Greek and Roman governments, particularly the Republic, Roman Republic, and especially Plutarch's *Lives of the Romans*.

But the history of the Italian city-states, the referendum, other, a rough nation I should say, the Renaissance, and the unfolding of English and American history, particularly in the 17th century in England, and the expounding of the common law by Chief Justice Edward Coke and Blackstone, Sir William Blackstone, so these were the sources that were being looked at by Americans.

It was, but at the same time, they, I think it's worthwhile for us to understand what in fact was the Enlightenment. It was a period of time that covered, oh, 150, 200 years in the 17th century and 18th century. It went back a little bit further into the 16th century a little bit, but also went forward into the late 18th century. And it was an attempt on the part of many to limit the strict enforcement of tradition and customs and rule under monarchies and under the Catholic Church.

This was particularly done by thinkers who drew upon Sir Francis Bacon's scientific method, looking at instead of revelation and dictates from the government, revelation from the church and dictates from the government, science was going to be

dominant here. Science would be used as a method, and the hope would be the result in all areas of human activity. Science would contribute to the improvement of mankind. That was certainly something to be utilized in creating government. The science of government was a fairly new perspective that people drew upon.

The Europeans talked about this a great deal. They wrote about it. But the Americans actually put this into play. They were the, in essence, the laboratory of the Enlightenment, and they understood that as did the Europeans. And so everybody was watching to see what was going to happen as new governments were being formed during and after the American Revolution.

It just so happened that there were quite a few people trained in the writings of the political writers of the time, those people writing during the Enlightenment. We had men like Jefferson and Madison, James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris, Alexander Hamilton. These people were extremely well-read. They had studied the classics. They had studied the philosophical writings of that, the Enlightenment period.

And they studied also human nature because it was human nature that gave rise to the actions of government. It's not surprising that probably the two greatest works that the founding generation looked to as offering guidance, one would be the Bible, and the other would be Plutarch's *Lives of the Romans*. So if you wanted to find anything about human nature, about what human beings might do, and how they would react to each other, you would find examples in those two books.

And Americans were very well-read, not only in those two books, but in all the other writings. I mentioned the men who had great knowledge. But there are others that had a classical education. Many of them had gone to England to get their education, and they found that, and especially to get their study in the law. But in the course of pursuing a career in law, they would get classical education in America first and then abroad as well.

But then, you had the whole community as a whole, men, for the most part, since they participated in government. Women not so much participating in government, but certainly important in the home and in educating their own children. And so it was important for literacy. Literacy rates in America were very high. And so even in the rank and file of Americans, they would read these important Enlightenment documents or the orations and sermons that utilized those writings.

And they would understand that material. And so there's very high literacy rates in colonial and revolutionary America. Those literary rates were highest in New England, probably reaching 90% to 95%, and then falling off a little bit in the middle colonies or states like New Jersey and Pennsylvania and New York. And then falling down a little bit further in the South because of the lack of widespread public education.

The other thing that made this kind of background knowledge important in America was that it was entertaining. People enjoyed reading their newspaper or seeing broadsides posted in the tavern because they were so involved with the politics, the local politics and state politics of the time. And this was a very entertaining exercise that they found.

The 17th century was particularly important for Americans for two reasons. One, you have the activities in England. This is the period where the Stuart kings reigned. Elizabeth died in 1603, and James I becomes king. And you have the turmoil of the Stuart kings with the Civil War occurring in the late 1630s and throughout the 1640s, the

execution of Charles I, the establishment of the Commonwealth with the only written constitution that the English ever had, the failure of the Commonwealth to succeed and to provide liberty.

And so when Cromwell died, and chaos ensued for several years where his son tried to assume power, that didn't work, and the restoration of the monarchy occurred. And Charles II, who was the son of Charles I, who had been executed during that Civil War, Charles II is brought out of France, where he had run away, and he's made king. And then, he, when he dies, his brother James II becomes king. He has his serious problems. And you have the English Civil War. That's almost 100 years of chaos that's occurring.

And during that time, you have a lot of political writing going on. The Commonwealth Men has been referred to by scholars. These are people that will write about the nature of government and how to protect liberty and how should government work. And it goes from one extreme all the way to the other extreme.

The one extreme actually written are several pamphlets by James I on the divine right of kings, all the way to the Leveler movement, where you have basically a benign form of communism that was put forth where everybody would partake in the benefits of all things in society. And there wouldn't be any super rich on one side and poor on the other side. It didn't last very long for the Levelers. They created too much fear, and that word itself was a derogatory word that was going to refer to them.

And so you had this turmoil going on in England that gives rise to this political discussion going on. Simultaneously, you have in America the founding of 12 of the 13 colonies. Only Georgia is founded a little bit later in the 18th century in 1732. But in the 17th century, starting with Virginia and ending with Pennsylvania, you have the establishment of the 12 American colonies. Each of them have charters, and all of them have governments that are established. And this is a real learning experience. They're understanding what's going on as far as constitution-making.

There is a competition in most of the colonies to lure immigrants to come for financial reasons, for security reasons, to ensure the continuation of the colony. And one way to do that is to offer rights. And so there are a lot of rights that are offered to colonial Americans. In fact, a number of scholars have looked and have identified over 200 documents that, in one form or another, guarantee rights to people living in those 12 different colonies. And so they're learning about government at this time.

The scholar who's done the most on the writing in this period, Joyce Malcolm, has identified 22,000 pamphlets that were written in the 17th century, aimed at the nature of government and how best to protect liberty during that time. Eventually, what happens is you have the conflict between king and the House of Commons. And it eventually ends with the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689, in which Parliament emerges supreme. And in fact, it is eventually declared by Blackstone, in his commentaries on the law, that Parliament is supreme. There is no power above Parliament.

Things then change a little bit after that as far as the nature of government. But simultaneously, with that conflict in England, that turmoil between the king and the House of Commons, you have similar events going on in the, each of the American colonies, where the assemblies are fighting with the governors to determine where

authority lies and how much people could be taxed and what kind of benefits different parts of society should be given, particularly in land ownership.

So this conflict occurs, it's repeated outside of England. It's repeated 12 different times, that this is going on. And all the time, Americans are asserting the rights of Englishmen as if they have all the rights that anybody in England might have. Those rights are transferable to the new world.

When the Glorious Revolution takes place in 1688-1689, and Parliament declares its supremacy over the crown, you have a different kind of governmental conflict, a different kind of politics. It's now occurring within Parliament itself. And so you have what is called the opposition men. And the opposition men are espousing the dangers of those in government.

And it's remarkable how similar things seem to be that the opposition men are saying that those in government are conspiring against the liberties of the people. Beware, they're going to take away your property rights. They're going to take away your liberty and do this or do that. And so these are things that are in the forefront in the literature after the English Civil War, after the Glorious Revolution.

And the Americans are taking in all of this as well. And they see that there is something to be feared in government rulers. This is partly the product of human nature. People are always subject to abusing power if they ever get it. And so people have to be careful what kind of power that they give to their rulers. And that's one reason why they write these documents that protect rights.

In England, they would write down their rights when the monarch abused the rights. And you get Magna Carta, the Petition of Right, and the Bill of Rights. And in America, colonial America, there is an awareness that there is a danger in those in power. And so they sign these documents in a peremptory fashion, saying you've got to approve these documents if you want us to give you our support in the form of taxes and revenue.

And so you have these, this kind of knowledge that government must be limited. It's dangerous. Those in government, being humans who they are and subject to the dangers involved, the corruption involved in human beings, they have to be, we have to be wary of them because of the danger they present.

The relationship between the Great Britain and America continues fairly smoothly. It's been labeled by historians as a period of benign neglect because England was so involved in its domestic issues. And then after the Glorious Revolution, so involved in international wars that it didn't have time to be oppressive to Americans. And so Americans grew up basically on their own.

But at the end of the French and Indian War, also called the Seven Years War, in 1763, we have a different situation. We have a new king on the throne, George III, who wants to restore the power and the prerogatives of the crown. And so he's pushing at home for restoration of some of those powers. At the same time, he's not very happy with the authority that the Americans have utilized themselves and wasn't very happy for the support that the Americans gave to the French and Indian War. And so a new imperial policy is established, and it starts generating conflict almost immediately.

And so between 1761 and 1776, we have a real debate that's growing in intensity each year, with one new crisis after another crisis, that the Parliament gets involved with the American colonies. And eventually, the conflict is so great the Americans are so

fearful of losing their liberties and their property, they really bind to this conspiratorial thesis here that Parliament wants to take away the liberty and the property of Americans and subject them to the same kind of treatment that Britain gives to the Irish.

And so Blackstone, which is published in 1765 and 1769 in four volumes, it enunciates two things that are very fearful to the Americans. One is the supremacy of Parliament, the other is that Americans will now be treated as they treat the Irish, and there will no longer be, in essence, the rights of Englishmen. So the Americans are really quite concerned over that, and eventually, are pushed to the point where they feel that the only thing they can do is declare their independence.

And so you get the Declaration of Independence that comes along, which is a remarkable document in and of itself. Up until 1776, even in 1776, with different petitions to the crown, you see the rights of Englishmen being referred to. That's abandoned in the Declaration of Independence. It's the law of nature that is predominant now. Natural law takes precedent over the rights of Englishmen.

Jefferson writes the American philosophy of government in 202 words, 5 sentences, quite a remarkable achievement. What took Locke two treatises to write, two books to write, Jefferson wrote in 5 sentences, 202 words. It's the American philosophy of government. And it starts with, we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And so that's, it's a truly remarkable document.

It presents the philosophy of American government. But at the same time, Americans realize they have to put government into motion. And so you get state constitutions that call for and a national constitution that's called for. The Articles of Confederation are drafted by the Second Continental Congress and submitted to the states for their unanimous approval. And the Articles of Confederation is not meant to be a new imperial government. It is a weak central government. It has only a, really, only the legislature, no separate executive, and no separate judiciary to speak of. And it's not going to be a new imperial government in Philadelphia.

The state constitutions are drafted. All the states draft new constitutions with the exception of Connecticut and Rhode Island, which just sort of brush off their old charters and get rid of allegiance to the, allegiance to the king, and make it into a operative state constitution. And there, tremendous power is given to the assemblies, weak executives for the most part, and subordinate judges also. And the assemblies, when they are bicameral, and they are in 11 states, the senates are pretty weak compared to the assemblies. So it's a real attempt at democracy.

It was espoused strongly by Thomas Paine in *Common Sense*. He felt that simple government was best and that a democratic government was best, opposed by John Adams, who felt you needed a complex government. You needed a balanced government for it to work effectively. The danger of too much democracy was there. So Americans are quite concerned that they'll come up with the right form of government.

There are a number of fundamental principles that are established in the Revolution that carry over in the form of constitution-making. One is the sense of order. Americans have a, believe in the concept that Alexander Pope, this great English poet from the early 18th century, he wrote that order is the first law of nature. And so order is

what they're looking for. They don't want anarchy, the danger of anarchy. They have a sense of a circular theory of government. If there's too much liberty, it degenerates into licentiousness, which degenerates into anarchy, which eventually degenerates into despotism. And so anarchy and disorder are to be avoided at all costs.

And so these state constitutions are established, and they're based upon certain fundamental principles. First and foremost, the union must be preserved. They were not united during the colonial times. But the Revolution, in their struggle for independence, demanded unity, and that concept is going to stay with Americans throughout.

If you don't have unity, you'll have a balkanization of America just like Europe. You'll have the need for standing armies. And you'll have warfare between the different states, new states, and they'll be allied with different foreign countries. And it will be a terrible situation where liberty will not benefit.

You have another concept, separation of powers, which is put forth heavily by Montesquieu but also Blackstone, and basing on much of what Bolling wrote, had written even before then. It's always difficult to decide where these concepts come from because they stand upon each other's shoulders. They don't write independently of each other often. But you have a separation of powers, which is critical. You have a division of power, the idea of federalism. The whole American Revolution was based upon this idea of federalism.

Americans are saying that there are two levels of government, the imperial level and then the domestic level at home. And there are two levels of sovereignty. The British would never buy into that whatsoever. But the Americans are thinking about this when they're thinking about their central government. And they give most of the sovereignty to the states, very little power to the central government under the Articles of Confederation.

You have the idea of a Republican form of government. This is something that Montesquieu again puts forth. Thomas Paine was a strong advocate for this in his pamphlet, *Common Sense*. He denounced monarchy, particularly denounced hereditary monarchy, and the idea of Republicanism is put forth. And that means different things to different people, but it basically means representation. That because there are too many people involved, they can't have a pure democracy. But they can elect people that will go and make a decision for them in various legislative bodies.

The, there's a sense that for republics to succeed, they need to be in small geographic areas with homogeneous populations. That's something that's espoused by Montesquieu. The anti-federalists, when it comes to the Constitution, espoused that also. The federalists, they have to try to explain away how you can have a Republican form of government in the large geographic area of the new United States of America. And so they pushed the idea of virtue.

And for the most part, what that means is not Christian virtues that we might think of all the time, but the manly virtues that are espoused by many of the writers. The manly virtues that were there in ancient Greece and Rome, strength and endurance and firmness and patriotism and also struggling for the good of the whole as opposed to the interests of private individuals. And these were things that Americans were to be seeking. It was important for them to instill these concepts into their governments.

Supremacy of the legislature was another concept that was there. The king was a dangerous element in society, and so we must put much more authority in the legislatures. The power to tax should come only with the approval of the people or their direct representatives. And finally, another major concept espoused and put in the constitutions are jury trials of the people. This is one of the most democratic elements of society. Excuse me.

The Articles of Confederation were too weak to effectively rule. The state constitutions put too much authority in the state legislatures. And it didn't take long before what Americans found was the tyranny of the legislature, the tyranny of the majority. Tyranny doesn't come forth only from the monarch, but it can stem from the legislature as well. And different folks saw the danger to liberty and the danger to property from state legislatures. And so something had to be done to change the nature of Republican forms of government.

And it was men like Madison and John Adams who pushed the idea of a mixed or balanced government. The liberty and property could be protected mainly through the structure of government, not alone through virtue because human nature was so prone to being faulty. And so you can't rely upon people being virtuous all the time. And so what you need is a government that will be structured that will use the benefits and the shortcomings of human nature, that will allow the government to work successfully toward the end of protection of liberty and property.

Hamilton wrote in the *Federalist No. 1* that this was the time that would perhaps be decided for all time whether men could create their own governments through reflection and choice, or whether forever they would be ruled by accident and force. And so this was a time, not only for Americans to decide this issue, but these folks in the 1780s believed that it was, they were working for all of mankind.

All of the philosophical writings of the Enlightenment had come down to this opportunity for mankind to use this thinking, to reflect upon it, and to decide also using the history that would be learned, be written, and used this to come up with a form of government that would benefit the most people and do what Jefferson had said in the Declaration of Independence, protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And so when they created the Constitution, they were creating what they called, and what got into the Great Seal of the United States, the *Novus Ordo Seclorum*. The new order for the ages is what they created in 1787. And it was based to a great extent on the knowledge that had been handed down to them through political writings and through the histories of the events that they participated, their ancestors participated in in England for the most part, and in colonial America as well. So I'm ready for questions.

CLOWES: Thanks, John. That was amazing. Adriana, why don't you join us as well, and John Greenler, my colleague, who will be reading out some questions. One of the things that really struck me listening to both of you was the reliance in all of these systems on really an educated citizenry.

And I think about, you know, my little civics class in sixth grade years ago, and how little I was required to learn about government when I was in college as a liberal arts major. It does seem like a really fundamental pillar of all these systems. John, do

you want to start out? John Greenler, do you want to start out with some of the questions from our . . .

GREENLER: Yeah. Thank you, Jody. We've been getting a lot of really good questions. And please, if you have something, it's not too late to make an addition. But, Jody, just on the point that you were just making, a question early on for Adriana, which I thought was really interesting and ties in, is what were the efforts to educate the public to enable them to judge and decide when presented with logical arguments? And clearly, you mentioned the theater it sounds like as being one vehicle for that. Were there others?

BROOK: Well, in terms of formal education, not so much. You pretty much had to be rich to get the kind of education that would train you to be a very good orator and a very good public speaker in the context of the assembly. Although, one thing that I will say, and this was both I think a move in a good direction for Athens, but also contributed to the demagogue problem, is that in the 450s, we see the rise of a group that are referred to as the Sophists. And these were sort of itinerant teachers who went around, and they taught rhetoric, and they taught relativism.

So like part of this education was, you know, first argue that illness is bad. And then, now argue that illness is good because if you're a doctor, it's, you know, that's how you make your living. And the Sophists offered their services for fees, but like much, it was much cheaper than hiring a tutor to educate your child. And so this sort of really increased the number of people who were able to sort of have that persuasive role in the assembly. But in terms of sort of public efforts to help people be better democratic participants, no. I think the aristocrats were quite happy having the upper hand in that arena.

GREENLER: Another question from earlier on, you kind of intimated a little bit around this, but was Athens the first documented democracy in history?

BROOK: Well, you know, that's what I was taught as a student, but I'm so hesitant to say yes. I think that the most honest answer is, I'm not sure. It's what I was taught. But I think a lot of what I'm learning now as I continue to teach in this area is that, you know, the sort of the standard canon narrative that you learn as a classics major is expanding all the time. It's embracing a lot more of what was happening in and around the Mediterranean and the Near East and Africa. And so, yeah, I don't want to say yes. I'm going to say yes, question mark.

GREENLER: Fair enough. Yep.

CLOWES: I wonder if John has a reflection on that. Do you have a thought about that, John, as well?

KAMINSKI: Which, this last question on democracy?

CLOWES: Yeah. Just the idea . . . earliest democracies.

KAMINSKI: Hmm. Well, certainly, Madison did a study of confederations, and many of these had democratic foundations for them. And he would go back probably even before the ancient Greeks. And what he found was there's no reliable history for this. And so we don't have any guidelines to go on. What we have is only failures in government to look upon in the past. And so we see what failed. We don't see what succeeded here.

And so democracy was looked upon, at that time, as a very dangerous form of government, that it led to anarchy. And that was too dangerous. And so even though you might say Greek democracy was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, it wasn't smiled upon by the founding generation. Something had to be limited.

CLOWES: Thanks.

GREENLER: Another pair for Adriana, and then we'll, got some for John as well. What was the duration of the Athenian democracy? And also in a great collection of questions, what were the mechanics of a jury of 100-plus jurors? You mentioned a hung jury, and I was like, how does that happen when you maybe have thousands of people on a jury? So . . .

BROOK: Right. So to the first question, democracy, so Athens has a little, a couple of little blips at the end of the fifth century. They become an oligarchy very quickly in 411, and then it's one of the conditions of their surrender to Sparta in 404. But both of those are quickly overturned, and they go back to democracy. And Athens persists as a democracy until the point that they are conquered by Macedonia in the fourth century.

And, I mean, I think a lot of the sort of institutions sort of running Athens internally didn't necessarily change, but that was sort of the beginning of the end with this external imposition of control. And then, when the Roman Empire conquers Macedonia, then Athens becomes basically just another part of Rome. So the sort of classical democracy that I was talking about today sort of into the fourth century, but not much further.

Oh, and then the other question was about juries. So the way that Athens did this is that at the beginning of every year, they would select a pool of 6,000 people who were jurors for that year. And they would all have to swear the Heliastic Oath, which was basically, I promise to be honest and uphold the laws of Athens. And when the laws of Athens don't have a solution to the problem, I will use my best judgment to find a good solution.

And so that pool of people self-selected into whatever jury trials were happening. So you just showed up on that morning, you know, if you wanted to be in a jury that day. And what's interesting, we have this play by Aristophanes that talks about how these roles got filled by a lot of basically retired people. So like if you couldn't, you weren't strong enough to be a blacksmith anymore, like you would make a career of going and being a juror because you got paid a day wage to do that. So it was basically a self-selection process from this predetermined pool.

GREENLER: Thank you. Fascinating. Yeah, some questions for John. I'll, we can just go back and forth a little bit here. Somebody said, I think I heard John say two books in particular were commonly referenced to learn about human nature. What were their titles, and could you say more about why those books held such sway?

KAMINSKI: Yes. Well, I was referring to the Bible and Plutarch's *Lives of the Romans*. And there are so many different stories that are in those two books that just about every aspect of human nature could be identified. I know in one of our preliminary discussions that we had among ourselves, I mentioned the movie, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. Some of you maybe have seen that movie. I think it was 1955 it was done.

But it's a story about a woman from Seattle that marries a farmer. And she's going to go out to the country. She doesn't realize that there are six other brothers out there. Seven brothers, they're all single, and she'll be serving all of them. But she thinks it will only be idyllic world of her and her husband. And she says as they're on the stage, the coach going to the farm, she says, my mother gave me these seeds to plant flowers, and my father gave me two books. And the two books were the Bible and Plutarch's *Lives of the Romans*.

So that idea came to me from Hollywood. And Hollywood is often not the best source for history, but in this particular case, I think it was true. That those are books that were available to, particularly to women who could teach their children, and that was a very important role that women played in educating their children. And it was done not just from a moral perspective, but also from reading, to learn how to read and write, an important role for women to teach their children.

GREENLER: Thank you. Another question, can you talk about who is included and who is excluded when we talk about quote, all men being created equal?

KAMINSKI: Well, it depends what your perspective here is. And I would say Jefferson believed all men were included in that. And that would be men, women, children, black, white, red, doesn't make any difference. They're all created equal in the eyes of God from a philosophical point of view. When you enter into a civil society however, that changes, and you get restrictions that are put in place.

And in fact, that was specifically provided for in the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which was written and adopted a month before the Declaration of Independence. George Mason was the primary author. And there is a reference in there that all men are created equal.

Someone raises the question in that convention, what about all these slaves? Does that mean all the slaves are equal with white folks? And so they put in a phrase, when they enter into society. And so all men are created equal when they enter into society with each other. And blacks never entered into society with the white folks at the time. In fact, in 1857, Dred Scott decision, Dred Scott was based upon that, that Dred Scott had no standing. He was not part of, nor were any other blacks, part of the society that was created when American government was created.

And so in that sense, in civil society, it would be limited to whatever was agreed upon. And in fact, it was pretty democratic. I would say probably 60% to 70% of adult

white men could participate, which was much higher than in most other countries in the world, maybe in any other country. It was the highest, and that's partly because of the availability of land.

When you're looking at it from a broader perspective, women are not part of this civil society, blacks are not, whether they be slaves or whether they be freedmen, for the most part. There are a couple states where freedmen could vote. And so you have that real exclusionary society. And then, you have to meet the property of qualification.

It's interesting that in New Jersey, when they wrote their first constitution in 1776, they made a mistake, obviously. They didn't use the word freedman. They used the word inhabitant. And so women who were inhabitants of New Jersey who met the property qualification said, we should be able to vote. And they did vote in New Jersey under the first constitution. When the constitution was revised, they changed the wording to freedmen, and women were then excluded throughout the entire state.

GREENLER: Oh, that's a fascinating story. Thank you. Jody, how are we on time? Do we have enough time maybe for one more question or . . .

CLOWES: I think one or two. It's 7:28. We're scheduled through 7:30. If we go over one or two minutes, it's not the end of the world, I don't think.

GREENLER: Here's an intriguing question for John. If the Revolution was fought for strong independent states and a weak central government, was the Constitution a fulfillment of the Revolution, or was it a counterrevolution?

KAMINSKI: Well, it depends upon your perspective. There's certainly the federalists who see the dangers of the Articles of Confederation and the dangers emanating from the state governments. They saw that the hopes and aspirations they had from the Revolution were not being met under that situation. The anti-federalists however, the opposers of the Constitution, they looked to the future, and they saw the dangers that the Constitution presented. And although those dangers may not be there immediately, it wouldn't take long before the dangers to erupt and threaten liberty and property. And so it is viewed differently by the participating parties.

GREENLER: I think we're going to be, we're getting a little short on time. But I do have to confess, Adriana, that I am really wanting to hear the story of the Delian League going sour very quickly. But we may have to hold that for another time, so . . .

BROOK: Fair enough.

CLOWES: Should we wrap it up there?

GREENLER: I think so.

CLOWES: Great. Thank you all so much. This has been really, really fascinating. And honestly, the, both presenters put together a fabulous reading list for us, which is very long and very detailed. And I will post that on, it's posted on our series webpage

already. I'll post it on the Facebook page in the morning. And I encourage you to dive into some of those resources because there is so much to know about all of these early systems of democracy and the development of our own Constitution.

And I really look forward to having many of you join us for our next session on March 4th, when we'll have Rebecca Webster, Richard Monette, and Margaret Noodin return to talk about post-contact indigenous governance. And again, a focus on the . . .

KAMINSKI: Not March 4th.

CLOWES: On March 25th. Thank you.

KAMINSKI: There you go.

CLOWES: Sorry. My bad. And they'll be focused, of course, on the Three Fires Confederacy of the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. And then, we'll have all of our presenters back again on April 15th, I think I've got that one right, to talk about balancing the common individual interests and the common good. It should be really fascinating to bring everybody together again. So until then, we wish you all a beautiful and increasingly vaccinated early spring. Be well.