

UNCLE SAM

PRESENTS

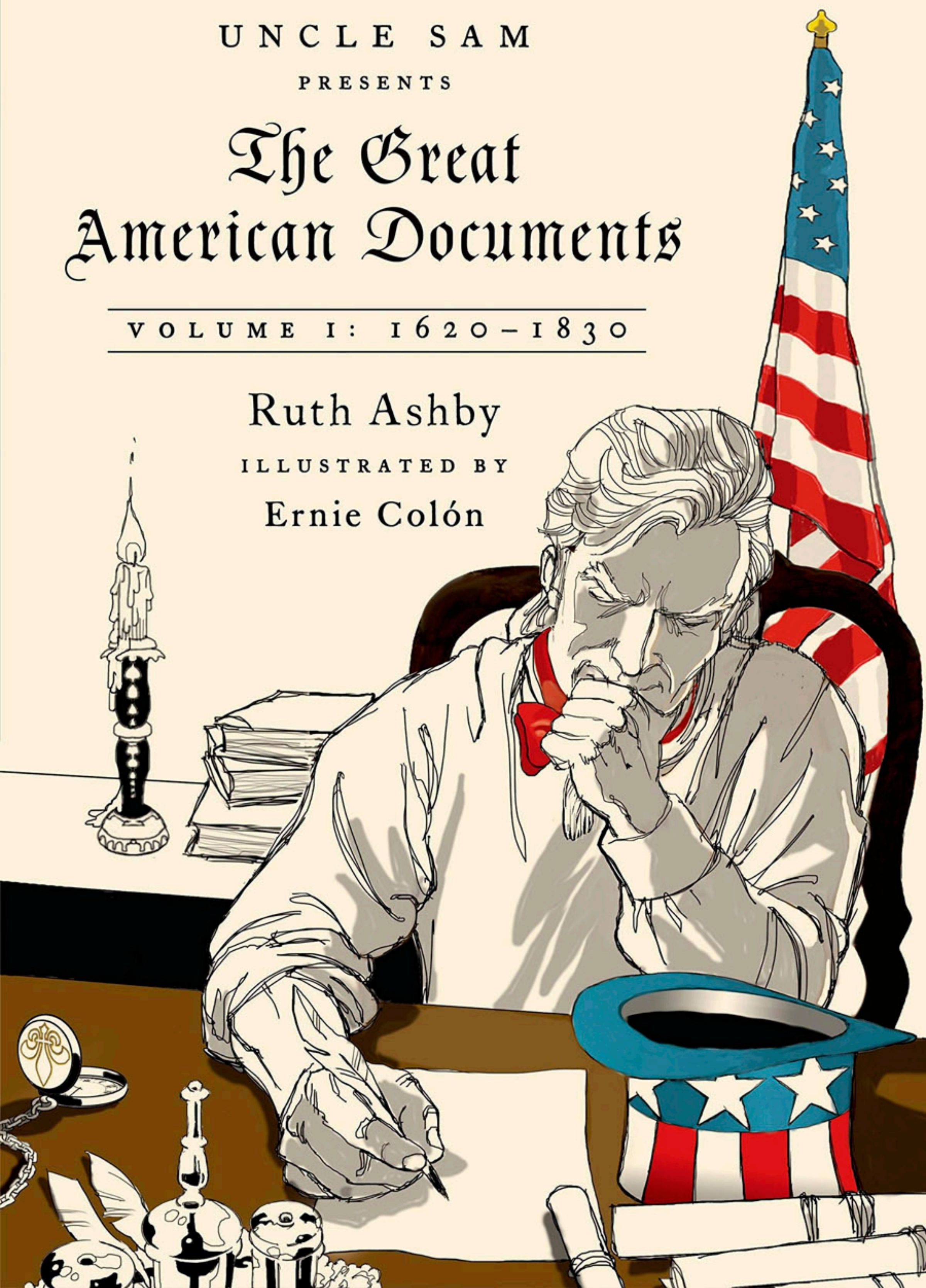
The Great American Documents

VOLUME I: 1620-1830

Ruth Ashby

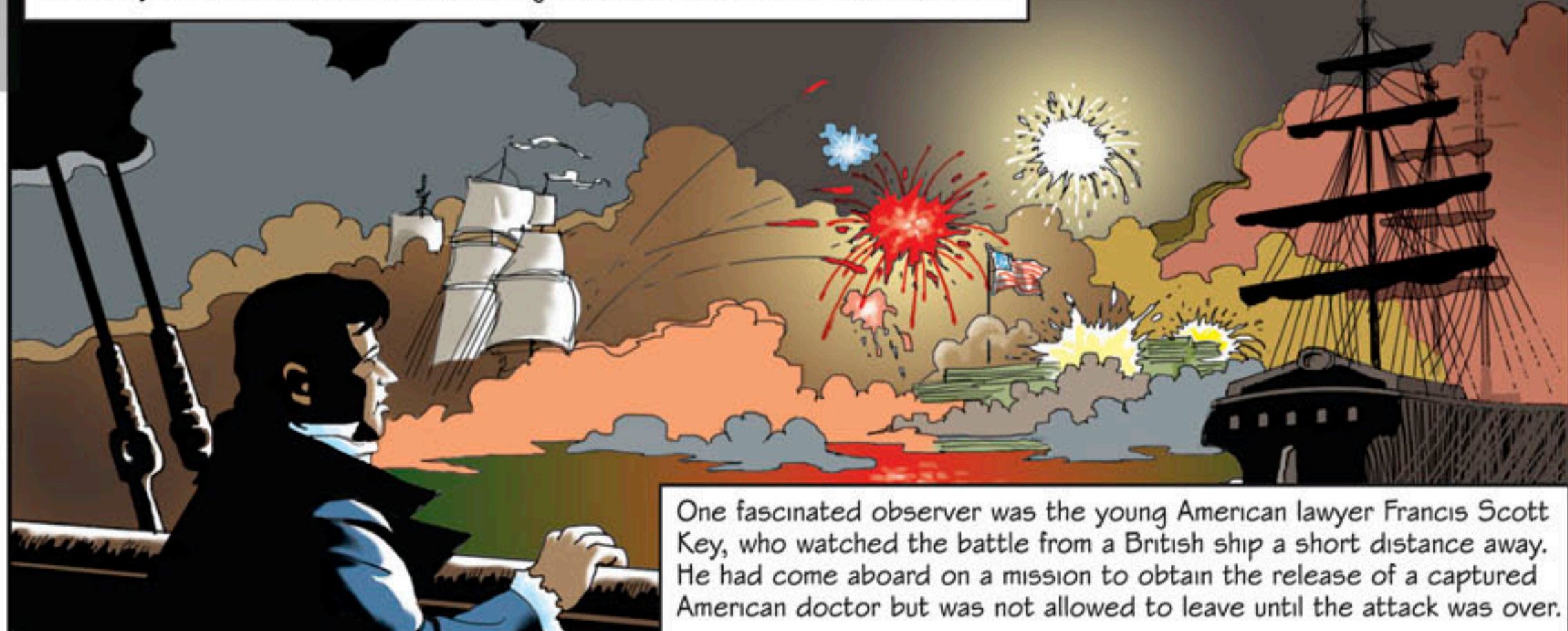
ILLUSTRATED BY

Ernie Colón



The Star Spangled Banner

September 13, 1814. British warships began their bombardment of Fort McHenry at seven o'clock in the morning. The assault would last for 25 hours.



One fascinated observer was the young American lawyer Francis Scott Key, who watched the battle from a British ship a short distance away. He had come aboard on a mission to obtain the release of a captured American doctor but was not allowed to leave until the attack was over.

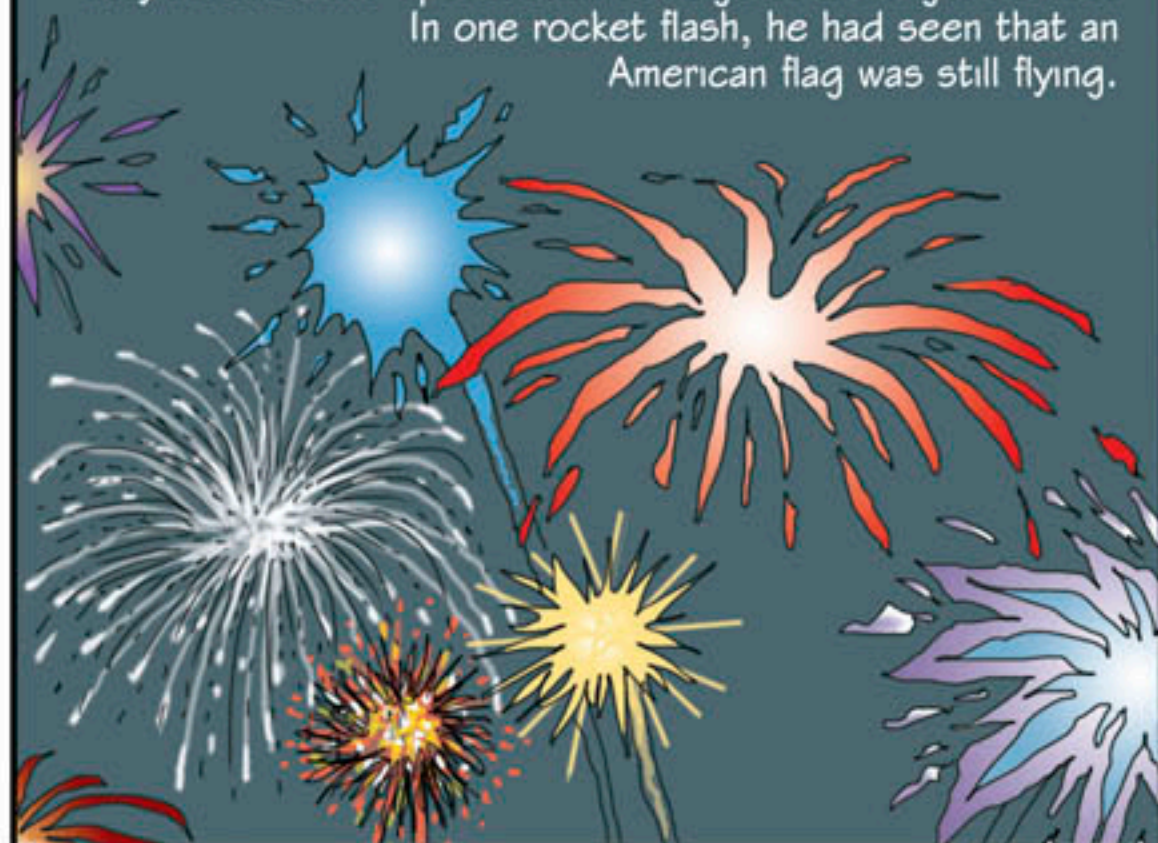
The shelling continued all day and into the night. As dawn broke, Key peered into the distance.

IS THAT THE
BRITISH FLAG FLYING
OVER THE FORT?

No, it was the Stars and Stripes! The British had not taken the fort after all! Overjoyed, Key began to write a celebratory poem on the back of an old letter.

"O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?"

Key recalled the spectacular barrage of the night before. In one rocket flash, he had seen that an American flag was still flying.



September 14. Despite their overwhelming firepower, the British could not destroy the fort or defeat its defenders. They abandoned their assault and departed. The war was not over, but Baltimore--and the whole eastern shore of the young nation--were saved from British occupation.



"And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, / Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there..."

The Star Spangled Banner

O SAY CAN YOU SEE, BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT...



By that afternoon, Key was back in Baltimore, where he scribbled down the rest of the poem and rushed it to a printer. Within days, the poem had circulated throughout the town and been turned into a rousing anthem, sung to the tune of an old drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven."



The song quickly became a national sensation, making its way to New Orleans, where a military band played it to General Andrew Jackson.

January 8, 1815. It was Jackson who had led the American troops in the Battle of New Orleans, the largest conflict of the War of 1812.

In an astounding victory, Jackson's force destroyed an army twice its size. The British lost 2,057; the Americans, just 13.



December 24, 1814, Treaty of Ghent.



Ironically, by the time that battle was fought, the United States had already signed a peace treaty with Britain, though no one in America knew it because it took months for the signed treaty to be shipped across the Atlantic. In one sense, the war changed nothing--the relationship between Britain and the United States went back to what it had been before the war.

But in another, everything had changed. For the second time, the United States had taken on the mightiest nation on earth . . . and proved itself.



A spirit of nationalism swept the country, and the symbol of that feeling was immortalized in a passionately patriotic song. Francis Scott Key's "Star-Spangled Banner" officially became the American national anthem on March 3, 1931.



The Constitution

Finally, a committee polished the language of the Constitution and added an inspiring preamble:

We the People of the United States



IN ORDER
TO FORM A
MORE PERFECT
UNION,



ESTABLISH JUSTICE,

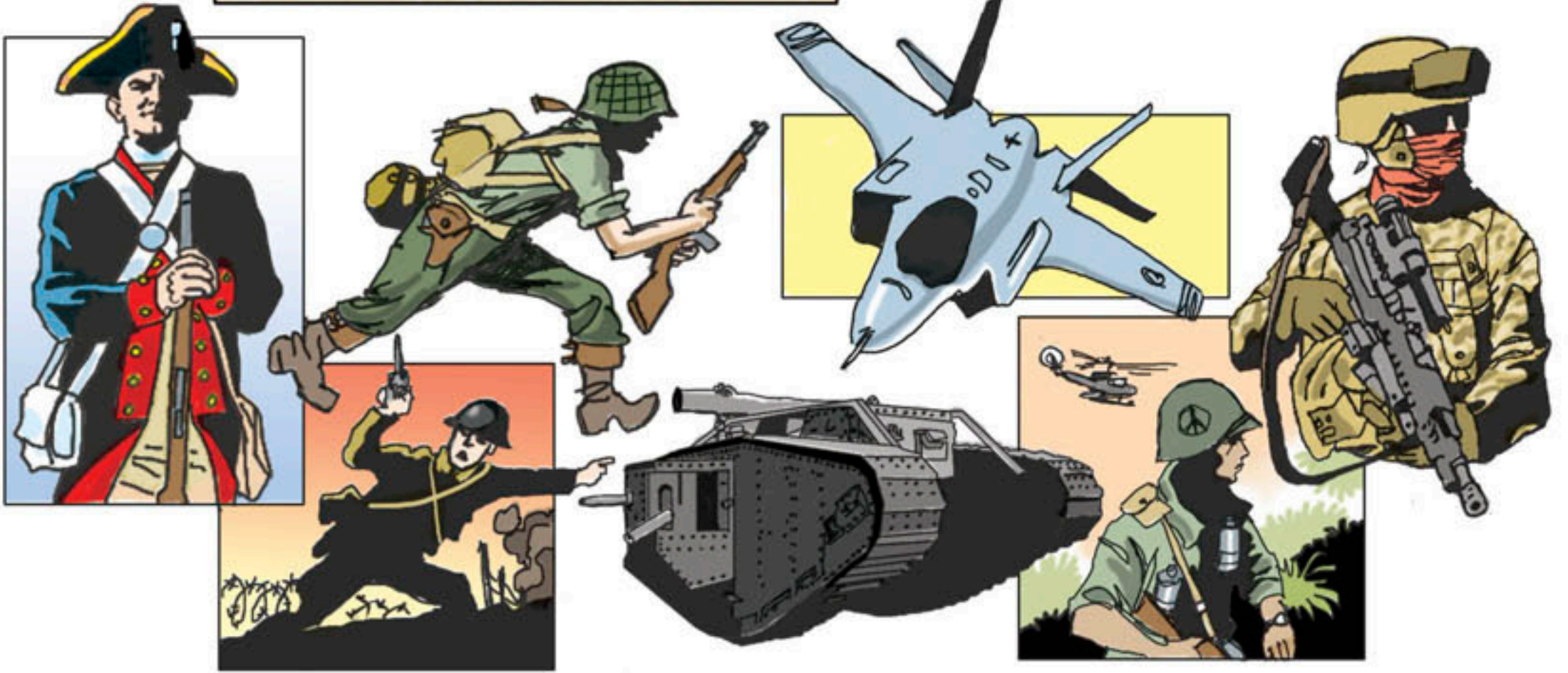


INSURE DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY,



The Constitution

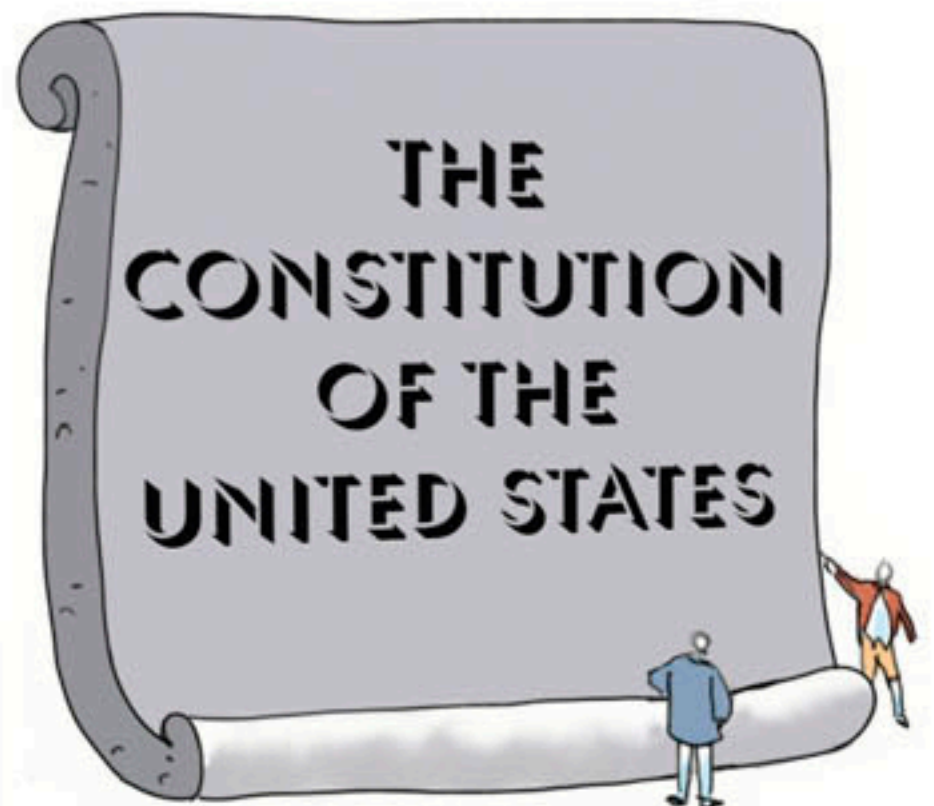
PROVIDE FOR THE COMMON DEFENCE,



PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE,



AND SECURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY TO OURSELVES AND OUR POSTERITY,



DO ORDAIN AND ESTABLISH THIS CONSTITUTION FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

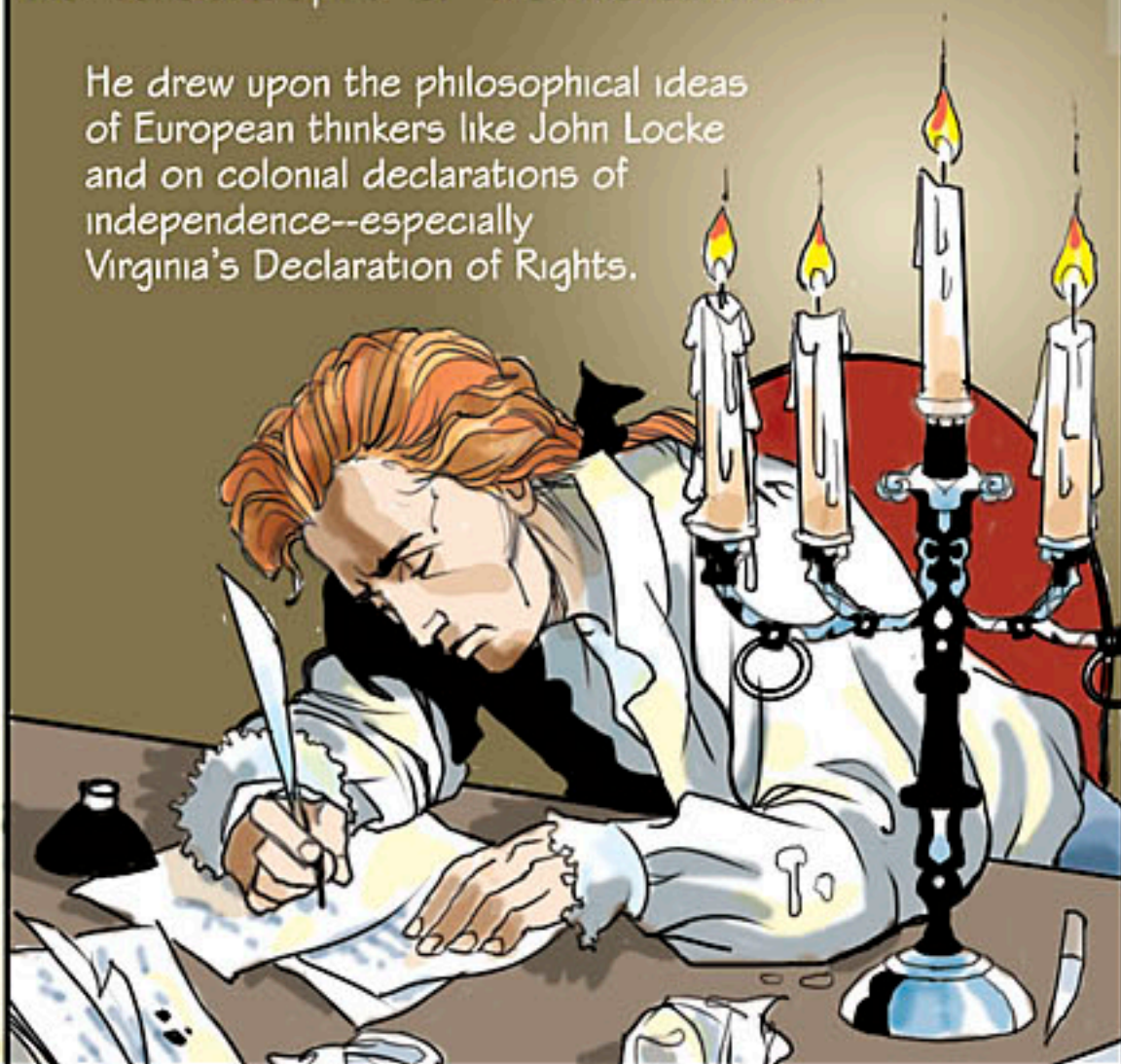
The Declaration of Independence

But who would write the first draft of the declaration? The committee quickly came to a conclusion.



The committee agreed on the basic form and content of the document, then Jefferson drafted it. He wanted to express what most Americans were thinking--to capture the "tone and Spirit" of "the American mind."

He drew upon the philosophical ideas of European thinkers like John Locke and on colonial declarations of independence--especially Virginia's Declaration of Rights.



Jefferson divided the declaration into three sections: the introduction; the list of wrongs perpetrated by the king; and the conclusion.

The first paragraph of the introduction states that the time has come for Americans to cut their ties with Great Britain . . .

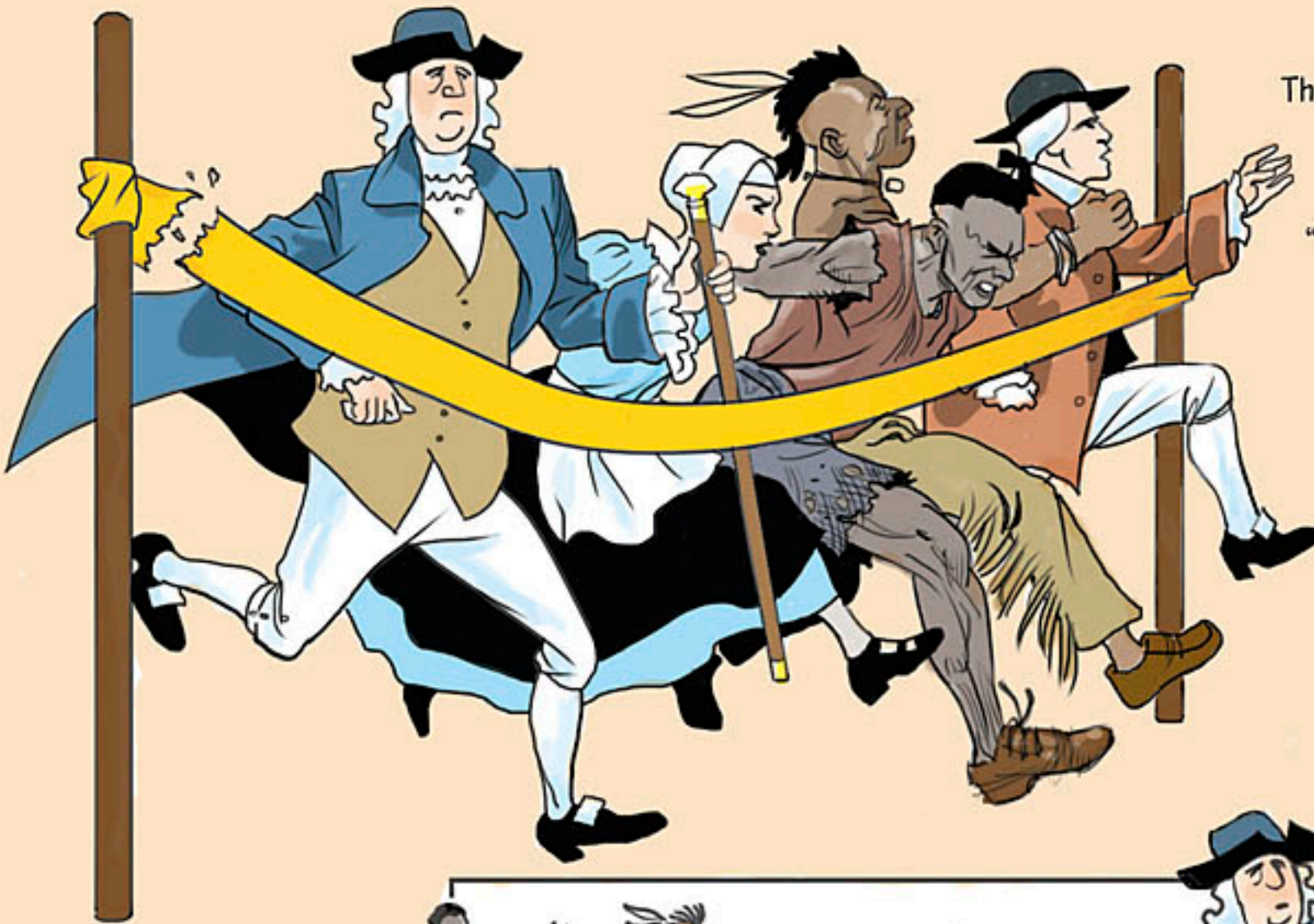


...and take their place
among all the self-
governing peoples of the
world.

NOW WE ARE
PROCLAIMING OUR
INDEPENDENCE!

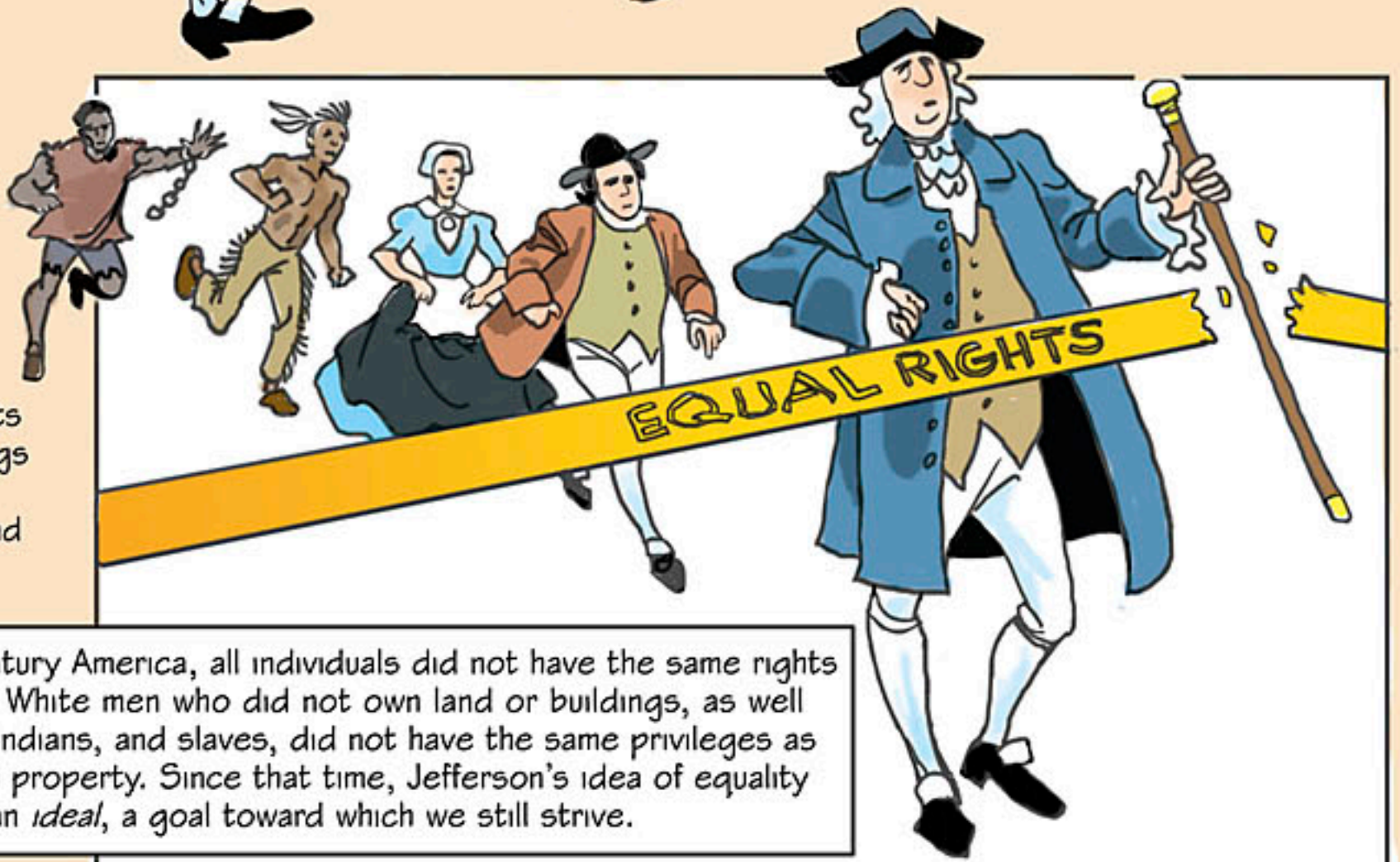
The Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident



The second paragraph of the declaration expresses the fundamental principles of the new nation: that "all men are created equal" and have natural rights that cannot be taken away from them.

By equality, Jefferson actually did not mean that everyone has the same *abilities*. Rather, he suggests that all human beings are born with the same God-given and legal *rights*.



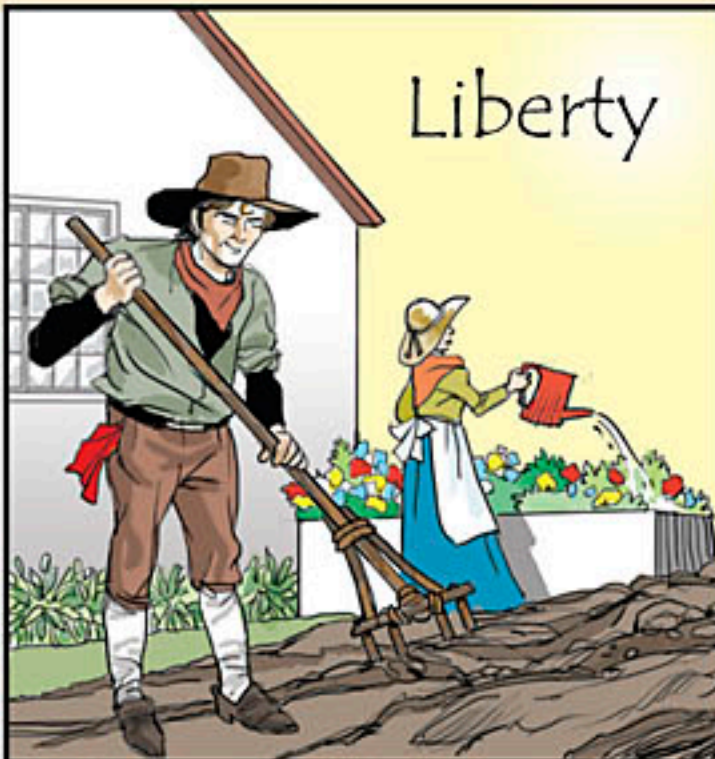
Yet in 18th-century America, all individuals did not have the same rights under the law. White men who did not own land or buildings, as well as all women, Indians, and slaves, did not have the same privileges as white men with property. Since that time, Jefferson's idea of equality has remained an *ideal*, a goal toward which we still strive.

The declaration defined natural human rights as including those of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" and said that governments are founded to protect these rights.

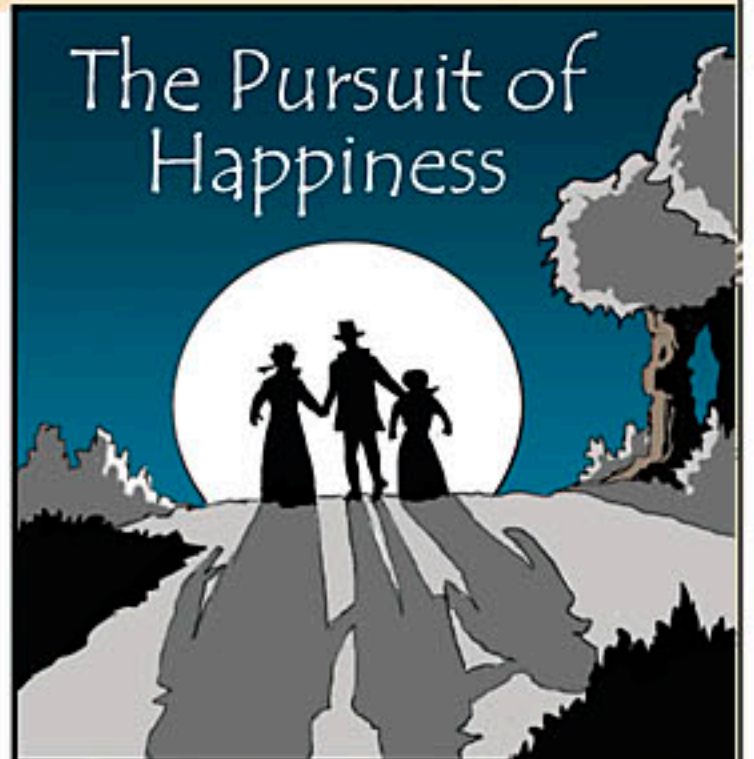
Life



Liberty



The Pursuit of Happiness



The Mayflower Compact

The Adventurers hired a 100-foot merchant ship called the *Mayflower*. On board, the Separatists met their new shipmates.

MAKE WAY, THERE!

DON'T TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME, SIR. I AM CHRISTOPHER MARTIN, GOVERNOR OF THE MAYFLOWER.

WATCH WHERE YOU ARE GOING!

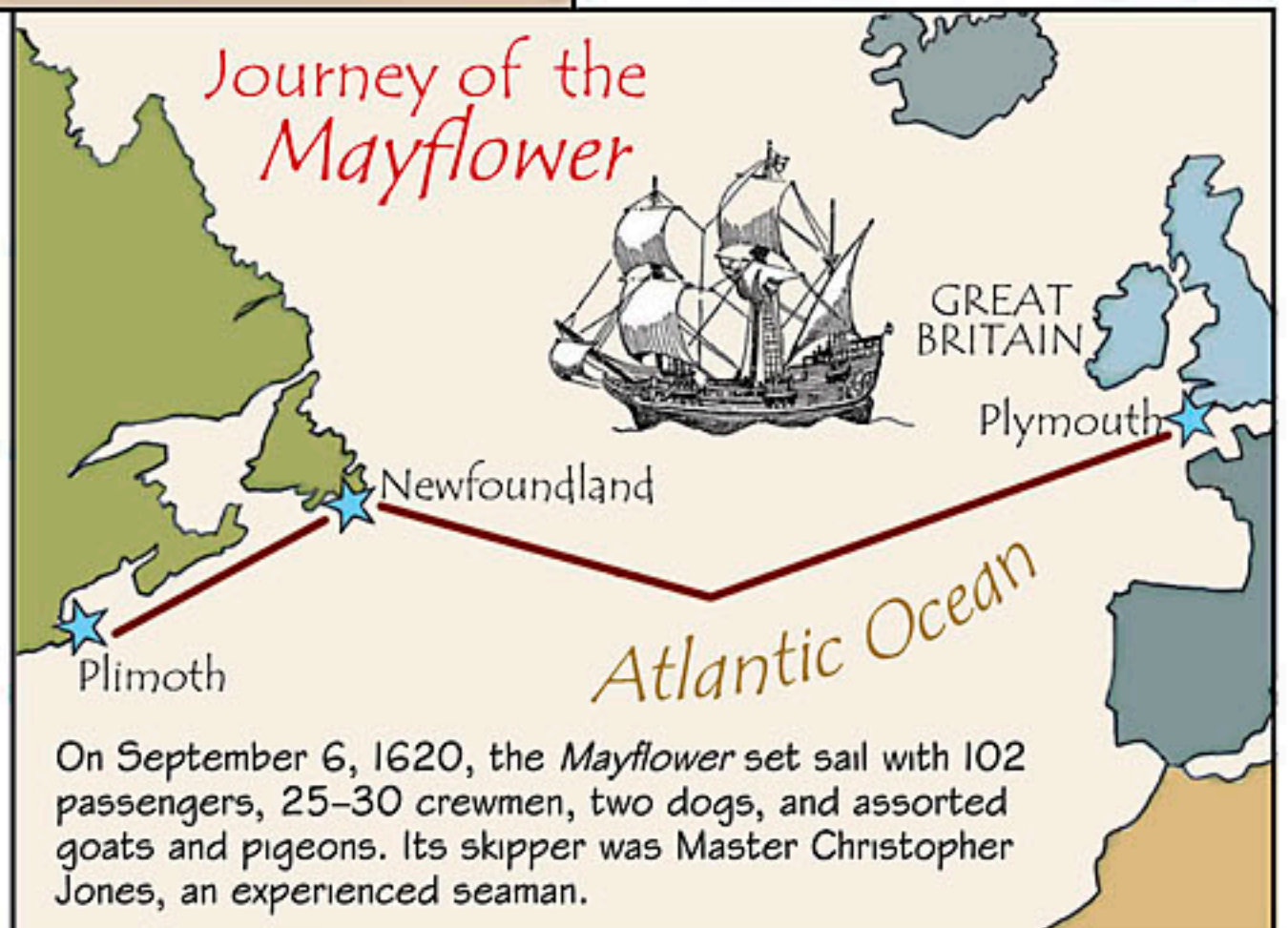
MY NAME IS BRADFORD, SIR, AND WE HAVE ELECTED NO GOVERNOR.

THE INVESTORS HAVE HIRED ME TO KEEP ORDER IN THE PASSENGER HOLD.

DO YOU GO TO VIRGINIA TO SPREAD THE WORD OF GOD?

NO, I GO TO MAKE MY FORTUNE IN BEAVER PELTS.

Journey of the *Mayflower*

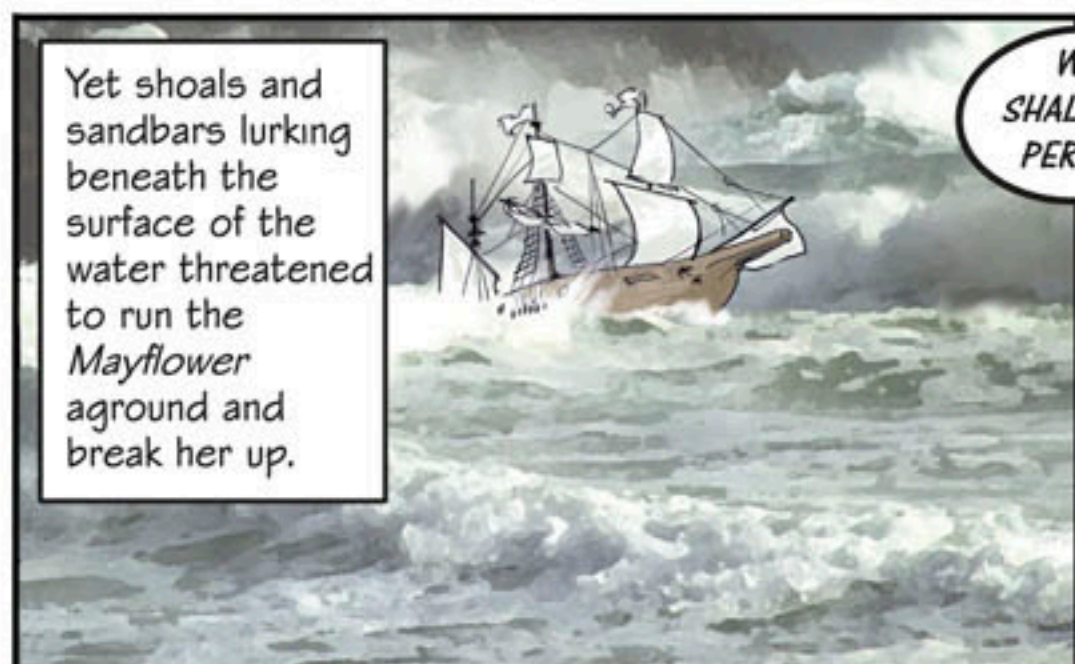
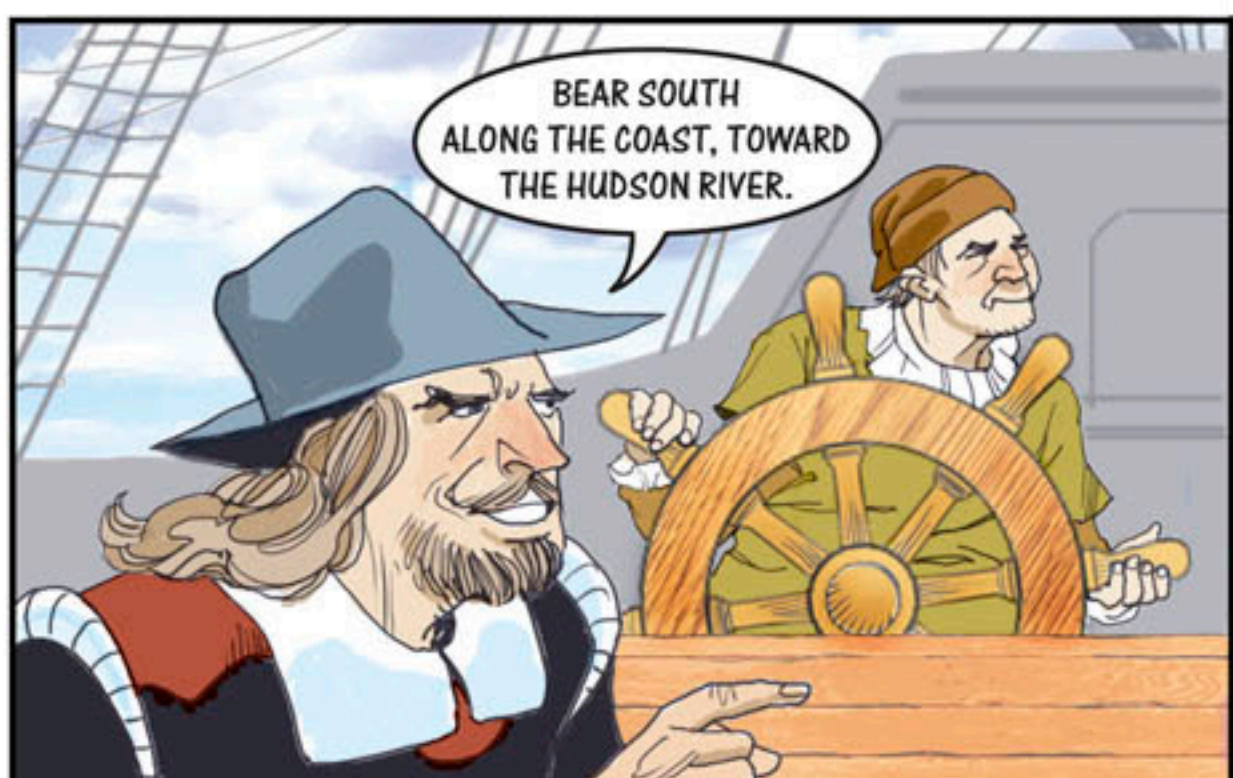
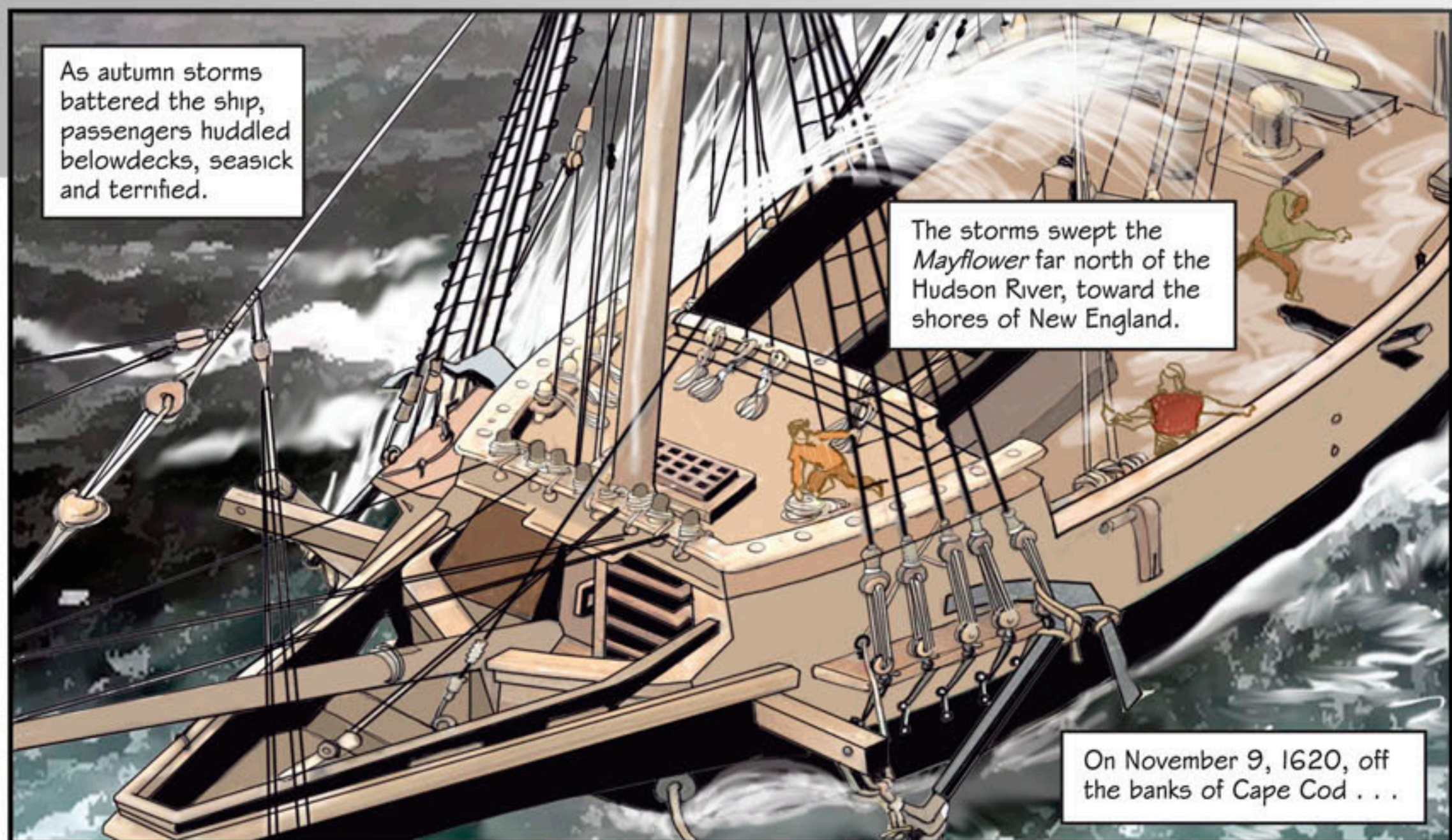


On September 6, 1620, the *Mayflower* set sail with 102 passengers, 25–30 crewmen, two dogs, and assorted goats and pigeons. Its skipper was Master Christopher Jones, an experienced seaman.

Only half of the passengers were Pilgrims. The other half were a diverse group of tradesmen, merchants, and craftsmen and their families, enrolled by the Adventurers. The suspicious Pilgrims called the newcomers "Strangers."



The Mayflower Compact



In the Great American Documents series, the teacher and graphic-book author Ruth Ashby and the renowned illustrator Ernie Colón tell the story of the United States through the major speeches, laws, proclamations, court decisions, and essays that shaped it.

The Great American Documents: Volume 1 introduces as series narrator none other than Uncle Sam, who walks us through twenty essential documents. Each document gets a chapter, in which Uncle Sam explains its key passages, its origins, how it came to be written, and its impact. This graphic primer is an indispensable resource for students and anyone else who wants the facts of American history close at hand.

RUTH ASHBY is the author of more than thirty books for children and young adults. A former book editor, she teaches English at the Portledge School in Locust Valley, New York.

ERNIE COLÓN is the illustrator of the *New York Times* bestseller *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*, *After 9/11: America's War on Terror (2001-)*, *Che: A Graphic Biography*, and *Anne Frank: The Anne Frank House Authorized Graphic Biography* (all published by Hill and Wang). He has worked at Marvel and at DC Comics, where he oversaw the production for *Green Lantern*, *Wonder Woman*, *Blackhawk*, and *The Flash*.

Ruth Ashby and Ernie Colón live in Huntington, New York.

THE DOCUMENTS
COVERED IN
VOLUME 1
(1620 - 1830)

The Mayflower Compact

"A Model of Christian Charity"

The Maryland Toleration Act

1705 Virginia Slave Codes

The Albany Plan of Union

The Virginia Resolves

Common Sense

The Declaration of Independence

The Crisis

The Constitution

The Federalist Papers

The Bill of Rights

Washington's Farewell Address

Jefferson's First Inaugural Address

Marbury v. Madison

The Louisiana Purchase

"The Star-Spangled Banner"

The Missouri Compromise

The Monroe Doctrine

The Indian Removal Act

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