

**Volume 19**

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**America's Revolution (20) – The Roots  
of American Exceptionalism – II**

**Lead: In the 1700s the United States broke from England. No colony in history had done that before. This series examines America's Revolution.**

***Intro: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts***

**Content: The phenomenon of American exceptionalism, the idea that the British Colonies of North America and the United States that emerged from the Revolution, was a special place, derived from Americans' sense that despite the obvious cruelty of**

**Native American near genocide and chattel slavery, they had carved a kingdom of liberty out of a wilderness. Yet, perhaps more important in the idea of exceptionalism was the conviction that Americans were on a divine mission, that they had been placed on the continent by the hand of Providence.**

**Whether they gathered in cool Calvinist New England churches or Quaker meetinghouses or New Light evangelical chapels or quiet establishment churches in the South or among rationalists occupying no interest in worship at all, the vast majority of Americans were convinced that Nature and Nature's God had planted English institutions on the**

**continent and that, in the words of Robert Middlekauff, “providential order appeared most clearly in the progress of an increasing, flourishing people.”**

**Therefore, when it came time to declare their independence from Britain they claimed this divine entitlement as a normal course of their evolution as a nation and a people, a special people, an exceptional people, living in a human enterprise, a society, though clearly flawed, which had at its roots a divine vocation.**

**At the University of Richmond’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I’m Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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**Morgan, Edmund S.** *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764-1766.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1959.

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