

Differences between the First & Second Great Awakening

Commonalities:

- Shared experience in the colonies/United States
- Marked by revivals and emphasis on morality/religious teaching
- Uniquely American with political and social significance
- Did influence new protestant sects
- Influences the “backcountry”

First Great Awakening:

- 1730s-1740s
- Credited founder: Jonathan Edwards (remember *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God?*) →
Based on Puritan/Congregationalist ideals
 - Northampton, Massachusetts
 - Preached personal salvation
 - Discussed repentance for sins (why? Remember “declension”?)
- Other major supporter: George Whitefield (revivalist, travels through the colonies)
 - More emotional, revival-like sermons and preaching
 - Influences the south (slaveholders participate; try to prevent slaves from attending)
- Influence of the “backcountry” – non-wealthy colonists living further west, take new revivalism to heart and form new sects (remember the significance of this group on Early American History)

Second Great Awakening:

- Early 1800s; usually 1810s to as late as the 1840s
- Most known leader: Charles Grandison Finney (has appeared in related DBQ essays)
- Directly influenced by increasing political participation of common citizens
- Plays a direct role in the antebellum reform movements, especially abolitionism (but also including temperance, prison reform, and women’s rights – remember the Mock Exam FRQ?)
- Popular in the backcountry; especially the southern Appalachian regions
- Again, slaveholders tried to prevent slaves from attending; eventually had to come up with Christian reasons for slavery
- Role of the Second Great Awakening on the frontier? As people move away from traditional homelands, they must search for a sense of community
- This is really where newer sects gain increased membership: Methodists, Baptists
- Also, very different sects emerge: Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists

I hope this helps!! 😊