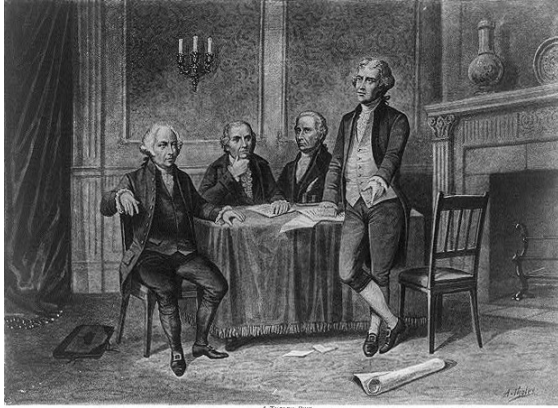


The Articles of Confederation

Our New Nation's First Constitution



The Articles of Confederation

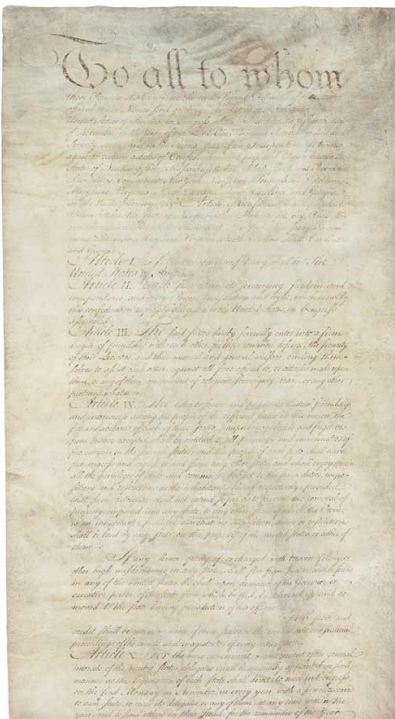
When the United States declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776, they were no longer ruled by Britain's laws.

So they had to write their own laws.

constitution:

the rules a country, state, or organization follows, usually written down

The United States' first attempt at a constitution was called **the Articles of Confederation**.



*We have it in our power to begin the world over again.
A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days
of Noah until now.*

*The birthday of a new world is at hand.
~ Thomas Paine, February, 1776*

The Articles of Confederation: What it Said



Included:

a legislative branch
(to make laws)

unicameral legislature
(one house)

each state had one vote

Had the power to:

borrow money

manage Native American affairs



Did NOT include:

an executive branch
(to enforce the laws)

a judicial branch
(to interpret the laws)

Did NOT have the power to:

create one national currency
(type of money; each state had a
different currency!)

tax the states or people
(no \$\$ to run the gov't!)

Why were the Articles of Confederation so weak?



What we didn't like about the British. . . So the Articles of Confederation said...

Taxes!

Federal government could not tax

The king had all the power

States only had to follow their own laws
(not any federal laws OR any other states'
laws!)

There was no executive branch or national
court system.

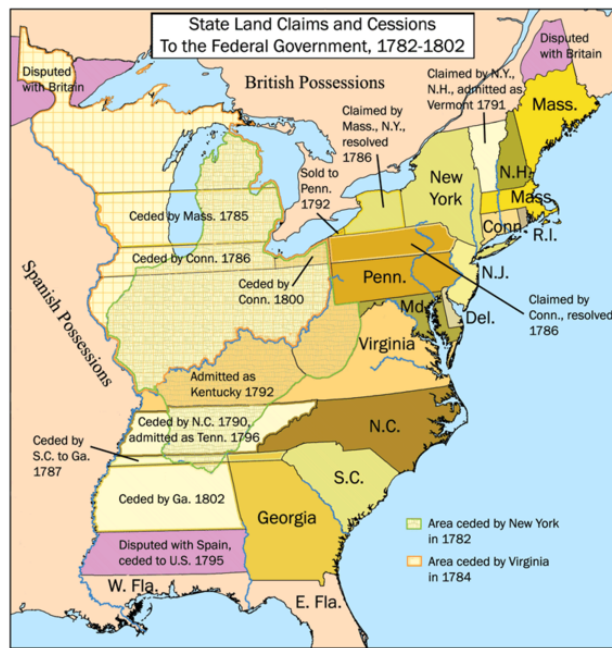
All power was in the King's hands - he
could change the rules/laws at any time
without any say from the people

Any change (amendment) in the laws
required approval from all 13 states

The Articles of Confederation Are Adopted

All 13 states had to ratify (agree to follow) The Articles of Confederation; this means they needed **unanimous** support.

Some states refused to ratify the Articles until all the states gave up their western land claims.



The Articles of Confederation became the official constitution of the United States on March 1, 1781.

The Land Ordinance of 1785

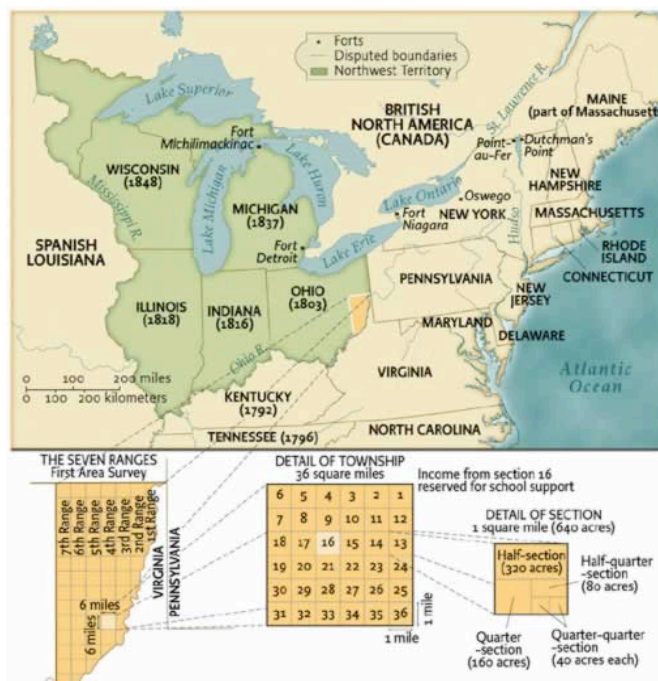
created by the government operating under the Articles of Confederation

provided orderly method of settling public land

land would be surveyed and divided into townships

each parcel was 36 one mi square sections (640 acres)

land sold for \$1/acre



The Northwest Ordinance of 1787

also created by the government operating under the Articles of Confederation

land in the Northwest Territory would be divided into 3-5 territories

could elect a territorial gov't once 5,000 adult males settled there

once the population reached 60,000, they could apply for statehood



Shays' Rebellion



this showed that the Articles of Confederation weren't working very well:

the government it set up had to *ask* states to provide militias to put down rebellions (and the states could say NO!)

Shay's Rebellion was only stopped when rich people in MA paid men to fight against the rebels

farmers in western MA couldn't pay their debts and lost their property or were jailed

in late 1786 - early 1787, local militias showed up at the courts and farm auctions with their guns and stopped this from happening



The Philadelphia/Constitutional Convention

George Washington held a meeting at Mt. Vernon (his home) to discuss fishing rights

while they were chatting, many at the meeting said the AOC wasn't working

they decided to hold a meeting in Annapolis, Maryland in 1786 to discuss changing the AOC, but only 5 states sent delegates

so they had another meeting in Philadelphia in May of 1787

55 delegates from 12 of the 13 states attending this meeting (Rhode Island didn't show up)



Their goal was only to revise (change) the AOC, not to start over (but that is what they wound up doing!)

The new document created at this meeting became our **Constitution!**

The Preamble to the US Constitution



SchoolHouse Rock Preamble

We the people of the United States,
in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice,
insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense,
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.