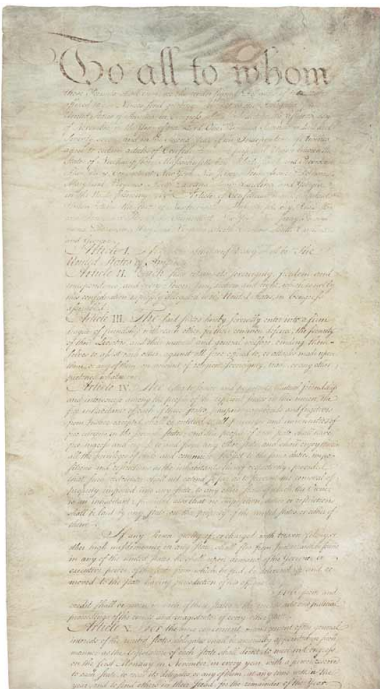
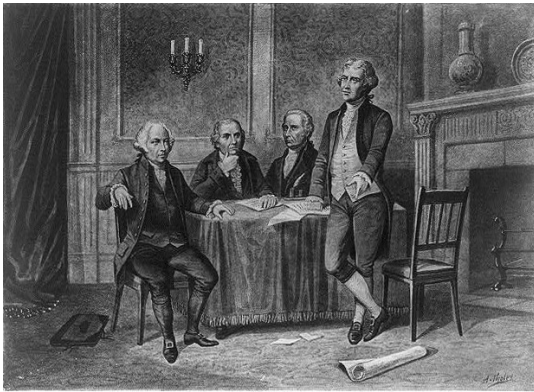


The Articles of Confederation

Our New Nation's First Constitution



The Articles of Confederation

When the Second Continental Congress appointed a committee to write a Declaration of Independence in 1776, they they also created a committee to write a constitution that would create a union of all the states.

constitution:
a written system of laws by which a state
country, or organization is governed

The United States' first attempt at a constitution was

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 (one house)
legislature

each state had one vote

Had the power to:

borrow money

establish postal system

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:

regulate trade

(some states taxed goods from other states!)

create a national currency

(each state had a different currency!)

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

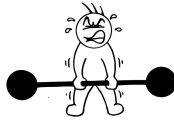
Why were the Articles of Confederation so weak?



What we didn't like about British rule...

So the Articles of Confederation said...

Why were the Articles of Confederation so weak?



What we didn't like about British rule...

Parliament taxed the colonies
(without representation!).

A large central government (monarchy) had all the power.

The colonies always had to whatever the king wanted them to do.

The King could change the rules/laws any time he wanted.

So the Articles of Confederation said...

Federal government could not tax

There was no executive or judicial branch.

States didn't have to follow federal laws and treaties and had their own laws (and they didn't have to follow any of other states' laws either).

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

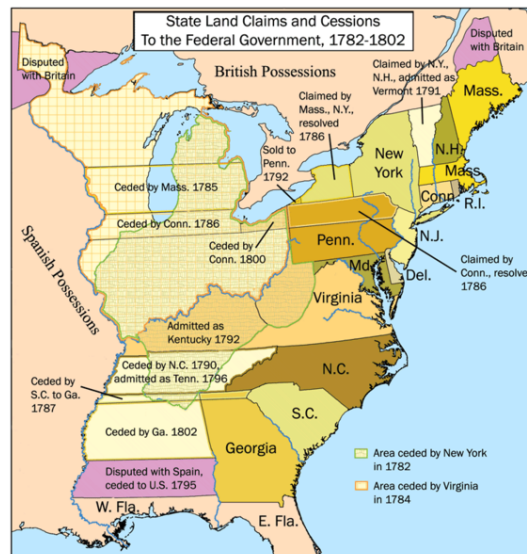
Ratification of the Articles of Confederation

The Articles required unanimous ratification by the states.

Virginia was the first state to ratify the Articles on December 16, 1777, followed by nine others.

Maryland, Delaware,
and New Jersey
refused to ratify the
Articles until all the
states gave up their
western land claims.

New Jersey and Delaware eventually agreed to ratify the Articles, leaving Maryland as the last remaining holdout.



Only after Virginia agreed to give up its western land claims did Maryland agree to ratify the Articles.

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

The Land Ordinance of 1785

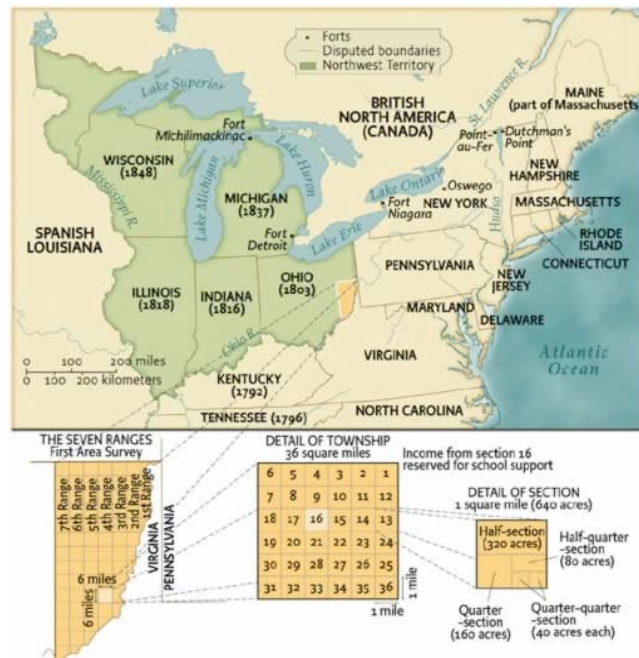
*created by the government operating under
the Articles of Confederation*

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*

provided orderly method for territories to become states

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

could set up a territorial gov't
(elected legislature) once 5,000
adult males settled there

once pop reached 60,000, could
apply for statehood



Shays' Rebellion



farmers in western MA, unable to pay their debts, lost their property or were jailed

in late 1786 - early 1787, local militias closed courts, stopped land confiscations

highlighted a weakness of the AOC:
there was no national government had to ask
states to provide militias to put down
rebellions!

only stopped by militia hired through
donations from wealthy merchants



The Philadelphia/Constitutional Convention

George Washington held a meeting at Mt. Vernon (his home) to discuss fishing rights while they were chatting, many of the attendees of this meeting criticized the AOC and suggested changing it

a meeting to discuss changing the
AOC was held in Annapolis, Maryland
in 1786, but only 5 states sent
delegates

55 delegates from 12 of the 13 states
met in Philadelphia in May of 1787.
(Rhode Island didn't show up)



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

The results were our **Constitution!**

The Preamble to the US Constitution



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.