

NATION: U.S. Constitution Completed

New Constitution Unites The States

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1788

The states at the Constitutional Convention have ok'd the Constitution—and now the 13 colonies [now called states] have a new set of rules. The new Constitution takes the place of the old, weak rules—called the **Articles of Confederation**.

The new Constitution sets up a government with three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial. Each branch has the same amount of power as the other two. This is called balance of power.

At first, the **Constitutional Convention** looked like a family fight. The 13 states did not want to give away their powers to the federal government. The biggest fight came between the big states [states with many people] and the small states [states with few people]. Would the bigger brothers and sisters step on the smaller ones?

After a month of debate, the convention finally agreed. It would take some ideas from the

big states and some ideas from the small states—the **Great Compromise**.

In this compromise, the Constitutional Convention set up two houses of Congress. The houses are:

■ **The Senate.** This house of Congress is made up of two people from each state. The little states will have the same number of votes in the Senate as the big states.

■ **The House of Representatives.** Each state counts how many people live there. The states with more people can send more **representatives** [people to represent, or speak for, that state] to this house. The bigger states will have more votes than the smaller states in the House of Representatives.

Finally, to be sure that all 13 states **ratify** [agree to] the Constitution, **James Madison** has promised to add a **Bill of Rights**. The Bill of Rights will be 10 **amendments** [add-on laws] to the original Constitution. These add-

on laws will give the people rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Now that the states have ratified the Constitution, a President will be elected.

Leaders at the Convention

Benjamin Franklin: 80, Pennsylvania

- American leader for over 50 years.
- Keeps peace among the delegates.

Alexander Hamilton: 30, New York

- Important leader.
- Wants a strong government started.

James Madison: 36, Virginia

- Important leader.
- Writes down all that is being said. This is the only record of the convention. The meetings are held behind locked doors.

George Washington: 55, Virginia

- Led the U.S. Army in the Revolutionary War.
- Chosen president of the Constitutional Convention unanimously [everyone voted for him].

Washington Elected First President of U.S.

Timeline: George Washington

- 1754-1763: leads soldiers in the French and Indian War
- 1774: speaks for Virginia at the First Continental Congress
- 1775: chosen by Second Continental Congress to be Commander of American soldiers in the Revolutionary War
- 1781: defeats Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown to end the Revolutionary War
- 1787: leads the Constitutional Convention
- 1789: becomes the first President of the U.S.
- 1789: picks the first Cabinet
- 1793: begins a second term [four years] as U.S. President

New York, New York, 1789

Every elector voted for him—and George Washington is the first President of the United States. He is being called the "Father of His Country."



George Washington

To make the new government work, Washington has chosen some men to be his helpers. These men are called the President's **Cabinet**.

Some members in the new Cabinet are:

■ **Thomas Jefferson**, Secretary of State. He will work to keep peace with countries such as England and France.

■ **Henry Knox**, Secretary of War. He will run the Army and Navy.

■ **Alexander Hamilton**, Secretary of the Treasury. He will see that the government gets money and pays its bills.

NATION: The Weak Articles of Confederation Die**Articles of Confederation Dead—But Not Forgotten**

New York City, 1788

The plan to keep the 13 colonies working together is dead—killed by the Constitution. This plan, the Articles of Confederation, was started in 1781.

How did it begin?

During the Revolutionary War, delegates [men from each state] met. They wanted each state to be independent. But they also wanted one government to watch over all the states. So the delegates wrote the Articles of Confederation. This plan set rules for the one government. But this plan died.

The Articles of Confederation failed because it was weak. The government could not:

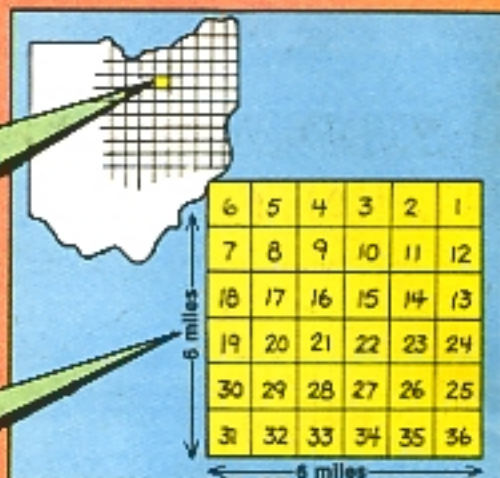
- Make paper money and coins.
- Make rules for trading with other states or other countries.
- Build an army.

The Articles of Confederation had two strong plans that live, however. The **Land Ordinance** and the **Northwest Ordinance** tell how to take care of land not yet settled.

LAND ORDINANCE ACT: 1785

Divides the area north of the Ohio River (called the Northwest Territory) into townships—each six miles square.

Divides the townships into 36 sections—each one mile square.



Saves the money brought in by section #16 to support a school.

Saves four sections for the national government to use it any way it wishes.

**Uncle Sam's Recipe for Statehood
Northwest Ordinance
1787**

Start with the Northwest Territory, a huge piece of land reaching from the Ohio River to the Mississippi River to Canada.

ADD:

1 governor, 1 secretary, and 3 judges chosen by Congress to rule the territory.

5,000 adult men living there. They can elect a legislature [a group of men to make laws for them].

60,000 people living there. They can apply to have their territory become a state.

1 rule that no less than 3 and no more than 5 states can be made from the Northwest Territory.

Some special rules to coax settlers into the territory:

- Any new state will be equal to the first 13 states. They will have the same voting power in the national government.
- No slavery.
- Lots of schools.
- A bill of rights to give freedoms to the settlers.

Northwest Territory, 1785: Land given to the U.S. from England after the Revolutionary War.



NATION: What the U.S. Constitution Does

Our Constitution—Rules for the Government

Below, a look at what the Constitution of the U.S. does:

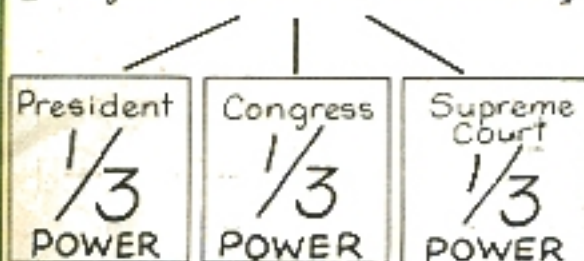


Establishes a Republic

A republic is a government in which people who are qualified to vote elect their own rulers.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

[the government of the whole nation]



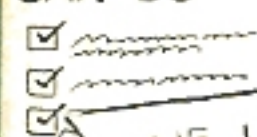
Separates, Checks, and Balances Power

The Constitution divides the federal government into three separate branches.

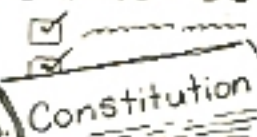
1. executive [president]
2. legislative [Congress]
3. judicial [Supreme Court]

Each branch has $\frac{1}{3}$ of the power needed to run the country. This is called **separation of powers**. The powers are **balanced**—each branch has the same amount of power. Each branch has **checks** [powers to keep the other two branches from becoming too strong].

CAN DO



CANNOT DO



Describes Each Branch of the Government

The Constitution spells out:

- Who can be president.
- Who can be elected to Congress.
- Who can become a Supreme Court judge.
- What the president, Congress, and Supreme Court can do.
- What the president, Congress, and Supreme Court cannot do.



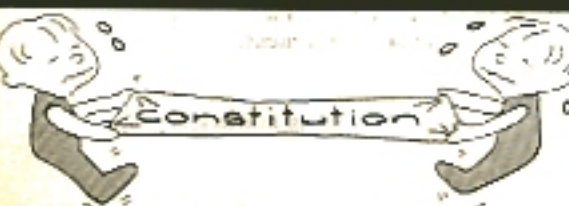
Separates State and Federal Powers

The federal government has more power than the state governments. But states are given some powers that cannot be taken away. For example, only states can set up and run schools. Only the federal government can print money.



Tells How to Make an Amendment

If changes are needed in the laws, the Constitution tells how it can amend [change] itself.



Provides an Elastic Clause

The Constitution is elastic because Congress can stretch the meaning of the words. Sometimes, Congress will have to stretch the meaning to make laws that are needed.

NATION: The New Government

Hamilton Attacks Money Problems

U.S. Capitol, New York City,
1791

The United States of America needs money. The new government has to:

- pay its workers.
- build an army and a navy.
- set up post offices.
- pay the bills from the Revolutionary War.

Where will this money come from? Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury has a three-part plan to get money for the U.S.:

1. Make new tax laws.

- Tax goods brought into the U.S. from other countries. This is called a **tariff**.
- Tax some goods made in the U.S.—like whiskey made from corn. This is called an **excise tax**.

2. **Start a national bank.** The bank would take care of money for all the states. It would see that the paper money and coins used were the same for all states.



Now, each state uses different kinds of money.

3. **Pay off old loans.** The U.S. has borrowed \$80 million to pay for the Revolutionary War. This money was borrowed from people, states, and other countries. To borrow money, the U.S. sold **government bonds** [pieces of paper that promise to pay back a loan].

The U.S. needs more money. But first it must pay back the money it already owes. Then people will trust the government and buy more bonds.

Whiskey Rebellion Over

Pennsylvania, 1794

Soldiers have stopped the corn farmers' fight against the government. Alexander Hamilton led the army attack on farmers.

Farmers, angry about the excise tax on whiskey, would not pay. Government agents [men] came to get the tax money. Farmers kicked the agents off their farms. So Hamilton got the U.S. Army to march on the farmers. The army has shown the people that the federal government has the power to tax.

Federalist Adams Elected 2nd U.S. President— Republican Jefferson is Vice-President

1797, New York City

Federalist John Adams is the second U.S. President. Republican Thomas Jefferson is his Vice-President. The voters have elected men from two different political parties for the two top jobs.

The two **political parties** have different ideas on how the country should be run. When the Constitution was written, there was one party. But now the people have split into two parties.

The Federalists:

- think the *federal government*

should be strong. The **federal government** is government over all the states.

- think the Constitution should be followed *loosely*.

The Republicans:

- think the *state governments* should be strong.
- think the Constitution should be followed *closely*.

Timeline: John Adams

1774: speaks for Massachusetts at the First Continental Congress
1776: helps write the Declaration of Independence
1781-1783: speaks for the U.S.



at Treaty of Paris talks
1789: becomes first Vice-President of the U.S.
1795: starts Federalist party with Hamilton
1797: becomes the second President of the U.S.