

Life under The Articles of Confederation

- What would be the role of slavery? Religion? State size?
- Articles of Confederation made dealing with other nations difficult (among many other flaws)
- Northwest Ordinance- made area North of Ohio a single territory, might later be divided into 3-5, 60,000 was minimum pop. For statehood, guaranteed freedom of religion and right to trial by jury, prohibited slavery
- The new confederation brought a period of stability with NA/US in the Northwest
- War had left the US in DEBT and taxation was still a big issue with citizens
- Hamilton and Madison pushed for a stronger central government
- Shays Rebellion dealt with taxation issues (among others) but even though it didn't succeed it showed the limited nature of the new government to control such uprisings.

Other nations and the United States → Other nations notice how weak the US government was

England

1. Kept its military in Canada
2. Refused to send an ambassador to the new nation
3. Tried to entice Ethan Allen to attach Vermont to Canada
4. Allowed US merchants to buy from England, but did not buy anything from the US. This crippled the young economy and almost caused it to become bankrupt.

Spain

1. Spain controlled the southern Mississippi river and New Orleans
2. They wanted Kentucky and Tennessee
3. In 1784 Spain closed the Miss. River to American trade
4. They hoped western Americans would leave the US and join Spain
5. Spain tried to divide the US (and nearly succeeded) by offering the US territory up to the Mississippi River – what they already owned from the treaty ending the Revolutionary War – in return for giving Spain the navigation rights to the Mississippi River for 25 years. Spain would also allow Northern merchants to trade with Spain.
 - a. The North was for this, the south was against it.
 - b. 7 states voted for the deal, but 9 were needed for it to pass
 - c. This was the first indication that the N and S might have different ideas for the nation

Building a New Nation

I. Early frameworks for governing

- State governments
 - The task of forming some type of governments began with the war
 - States needed to draft some type of written constitution defining the power and structure of government--did not trust unwritten constitutions such as Britain's
 - To draft the constitutions, the states called on conventions of their leading citizens (that supported the revolution)
 - Most structures similar
 - Strong legislature (usually two houses)
 - Weak governor (usually elected annually by the legislature) with few powers
 - independent judiciary
 - More people enfranchised (property qualifications lowered)
 - Limits on government authority--bill of rights
 - freedom of press, speech, and religion
 - fair trial and protection against general searches
 - consent required for taxation
 - First systems had serious problems
 - weak executive meant that action was slow, legislature had to act first
 - governor's power gradually increased
 - Many state constitutions were rewritten during the 1780s and 1790s
 - states found original constitutions just did not work
 - began to place more faith on a system of checks and balances
 - most power still rested in the legislatures

- Articles of Confederation
 - In 1777 the Second Continental Congress drafted the Articles of Confederation
 - Created a national government consisting of a unicameral legislature
 - One representative from each of the 13 colonies
 - No executive
 - Designed as a league of states called the United States of America--emphasis on the states
 - each state remained sovereign
 - any powers not specifically delegated to the national government--that is, Congress--remained in the states
 - Powers given to national government were limited
 - settlement of disputes between states
 - regulating foreign affairs (including Indian trade)
 - setting value of national and state coinage--to ensure standard trade
 - no power to tax or raise money other than through the states
 - no power to enforce its decisions upon the states
 - Governing under the Articles
 - Because unanimous consent needed, Articles could not be approved until 1780--Maryland upset over the distribution of western lands

- Weaknesses in the Articles became quickly apparent
 - Foreign relations and trade presented major problems
 - each state went their own ways in this area--confiscation of loyalist property was a major diplomatic problem
 - major problem because Britain embargoed trade between the states and Britain or its colonies in West Indies--came at a time when national economy was depressed
 - states also pursued their own policies regarding dealings with Native American tribes--led to a series of wars in the Northwest that were not settled until 1795
 - Northwest Ordinance of 1787--biggest success under the Articles of Confederation
 - Northwest territory--area bordered by Mississippi River, Ohio River, and Great Lakes
 - Prohibited slavery in the territory--even southern states agreed to this provision
 - Gave bill of rights--jury trial, freedom of religion, right of new states to join the Union on equal footing with older states, giving citizens in territories same rights as citizens of states
 - earlier Northwest ordinances had laid out how townships were to be created and provided a method of funding education in the region
- Calling a convention to deal with trade policy
 - In 1786, representatives from five states met in Maryland to discuss problems with trade policy
 - Being too few in number to make any difference, they dismiss the meeting calling for a new Constitutional convention the following year in Philadelphia--asking all states to send delegates
 - response slow at first, until Shay's Rebellion scares the elites of the states into reacting
- Shay's Rebellion
 - Depressed prices for agricultural products and tight credit market (creditors demanding specie) left farmers hurting
 - Many farmers asked for relief through issuing paper money
 - Most creditors (along with some other Americans) fought against the issuing of paper money
 - In Mass., economic situation very bad for some
 - conservatives had run govt. since 1780, levying heavy taxes to pay off war debt (held mainly by Boston merchants--and paid off mainly by farmers)
 - In 1786, after the state refused to issue paper money, people in three western counties revolted
 - Jan. 1787: 1,200 farmers and their allies, led by Daniel Shay--a war veteran--attacked the Springfield arsenal
 - the farmers were defeated easily
 - rumors of the rebellion by the poor put terror into the hearts of the "better kind of people"
 - Shays' Rebellion scared the elite!!!