

# CHAPTER 9

## CONFEDERATION AND CONSTITUTION, 1776–1790

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1. **Constitution Making in the States (pp. 168–171)** Significantly for the future national constitution, Congress asked the ex-colonies to produce formal documents summoning themselves into being as new states. List two features of these new state constitutions that you found to be particularly significant:
  - (1)
  - (2)
  
2. **Articles of Confederation and Land Policy (pp. 179–182)** (Note: It's interesting to think of the similarities between the U.S. under the Articles and the European countries today that are working gradually to come together under the European Union. The method of tax collecting is also similar to the United Nations today which must rely on assessments from member states. The U.S. and other countries often withhold their assessments if they disagree with certain U.N. policies.)
  - a. On p. 171, the authors call the thirteen original states essentially sovereign countries because they \_\_\_\_\_ their own money, raised their own \_\_\_\_\_ and navies, and erected their own \_\_\_\_\_ barriers. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Confederation were passed by Congress in 17\_\_\_\_, but required unanimous approval of the states. What had to be done with regard to state claims to western lands before all states would concur?
    - b. List three features of the Articles of Confederation that differ from our current Constitution:
      - (1)
      - (2)
      - (3)
    - c. Despite its weakness under the Articles, the authors praise the passage by Congress of two highly significant “red-letter” laws. The \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinance of 1785 called for the Northwest Territory to be surveyed and sold to pay off the national debt, with a part of each section to be set aside for public education. Even more important because it meant voluntarily giving up power, the \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinance of 1787 set up the mechanism by which these territories could become states on an equal basis with the original thirteen.
  
3. **The Horrid Specter of Anarchy (pp. 184 – 186)**
  - a. The weak and divided American government was at the mercy of foreign powers, especially its previous mother country, \_\_\_\_\_. A debtor uprising in western \_\_\_\_\_ in 17\_\_\_\_ called \_\_\_\_\_ Rebellion exemplified the potential for anarchy at home in the absence of a strong central government. Ostensibly to strengthen the Articles, the states sent delegates to a convention in \_\_\_\_\_ in May 17\_\_\_\_. The method of selection (by state legislatures) assured that delegates would be “a select group of propertied men.” \*\*\* Is it your sense that the main interest of these delegates was stability and order or democracy and popular freedom? Why?

#### 4. Hammering Out a Bundle of Compromises (pp. 187- 189)

George \_\_\_\_\_ was elected chairman of the convention, but the real “Father of the Constitution,” who seized the initiative early, was James \_\_\_\_\_ of Virginia. When the convention decided to scrap the Articles and start anew, the bargaining began. What was the

- (1) “Great Compromise”:
- (2) “Three-fifths Compromise”:
- (3) Electoral College:
- (4) Principle of “Checks and Balances”:

#### 5. The Clash of Federalists and Antifederalists (pp. 190–194)

a. \*\*\* From your perspective, what were the two best arguments against the new Constitution advanced by the mostly backcountry Antifederalists?

(1)

(2)

b. Ratification was helped by publication of *The \_\_\_\_\_*, an eloquent theoretical defense written by Alexander \_\_\_\_\_, James \_\_\_\_\_, and John \_\_\_\_\_. What do the authors mean when they say on p. 186 that “the minority had triumphed—twice?”

(1) First:

(2) Second:

### VARYING VIEWPOINTS The Constitution: Economic or Ideological Interpretation

1. Summarize the economic interpretation of the Constitution put forward by progressive historian Charles Beard in 1913. Then list one or two pieces of evidence he uses to support his thesis.

Thesis:

Evidence:

2. Summarize the more revolutionary or ideological interpretation of historian Gordon Wood in 1969. Then list one or two pieces of evidence, including Madison’s creative justification for an “extensive republic” in *Federalist 10*.

Thesis:

Evidence:

3. \*\*\* Do you have any view about these differing interpretations? Do you see the Constitution as a revolutionary or reactionary document? Review again the authors' conclusions on pp. 186–187. On balance, do you see the Constitution as the triumph of a conservative minority out to protect their economic interests or as a triumph of the country's brightest minds who sought to apply republican theory better to the American situation?

## THE CONSTITUTION (Appendix Page A34)

1. **Preamble:** Signers of the Declaration of Independence had referred to themselves as “We, the representatives of the United States of America . . .,” whereas the Constitution starts off “We the people of the United States.” \*\*\* Can you come up with a theory to explain this important distinction? If you are familiar with the political theories of John Locke, can you make a connection between those theories and the phrase “We the people . . .”?

## CHAPTER 9 TERM SHEET Confederation and Constitution

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Pages 166–168

Abigail Adams

Pages 168–171

Massachusetts State Constitution (Hint: Last but best of state Constitutions- Why?)

Bill of Rights

Pages 171–175

Articles of Confederation (1778–1781)

Land Ordinance of 1785

Northwest Ordinance of 1787

Pages 175–182

Shays's Rebellion (1786)

Alexander Hamilton

Philadelphia Constitutional Convention (May–July 1787)

Benjamin Franklin

James Madison

Virginia (large-state) Plan

New Jersey (small-state) Plan

“Great Compromise”

Electoral College

“Three-fifths Compromise”

Checks and balances

Pages 182–187

Antifederalists

Federalists

*The Federalist Papers* (Hamilton/Madison/Jay)