

Name _____

Date _____

CHAPTER 7 – FOUNDING A NATION

America Under the Confederation

What were the achievements and problems of the Confederation government?

The Articles of Confederation

Articles of Confederation was the first written constitution drafted by Congress in 1777 (ratified 1781)

- o Sought to balance need for national coordination of the War on Independence with fear of centralized power (danger to liberty)
- o More of a treaty for mutual defense (“firm league of friendships”)
- o 13 states retained individual “sovereignty, freedom, and independence”

National government

- o Consisted of a one house Congress
 - 1 vote per state (regardless of population)
 - No president to enforce laws
 - No judiciary to interpret laws Major decisions required 9 votes (not simple majority)
- o Only powers specifically granted to national governments were those essential to independence
 - Declaring war
 - Conducting foreign affairs
 - Making treaties with other governments
- o Had no financial resources
 - Could coin money
 - Lacked power to levy tax or regulate commerce
 - Revenue came from individual state contributions
- o To amend Articles: required consent of ALL states
- o Established national control over land west of 13 states
 - Originally, Virginia, Connecticut, Carolinas claimed lots of western land
 - Eventually ceded western land claims in the name of national unity

Congress, Settlers, and the West

- Congress' position was that Indians, by aiding the British during the war, forfeited their right to land between states and Mississippi River
 - o No distinction was made between tribes that sided with the enemy, sided with patriots, or were neutral
 - o Indians surrendered their land at peace conferences at the demand of state representatives.
- Confederation was conflicted on what to do with western land
 - o Some believed economic health required farmers to have land
 - o Some believed land sales as a potential revenue source
- Large population movement from settled parts of original states to frontier areas (upstate NY, and across Appalachian Mountains to Kentucky and Tennessee)
 - o Settlers believed the right to take possession of land and use it as they saw fit was essential to American freedom
 - o Leaders
 - o Believed unregulated flow of population across mountains would provoke warfare with Indians
 - o Saw frontier settlers as disorderly and lacking respect for authority