

# Articles of Confederation



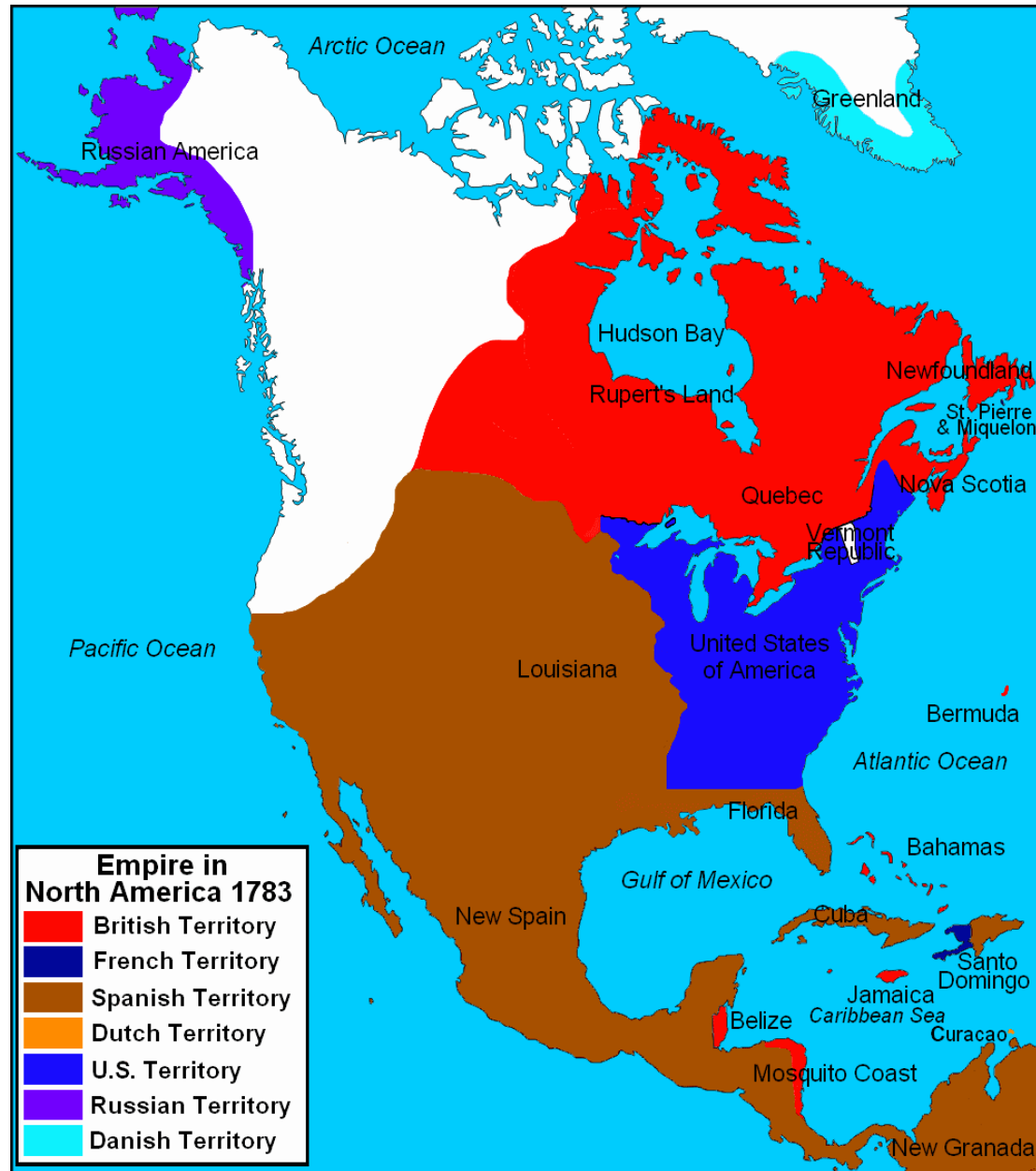
*"Rough Sailing Ahead?"*

# After Independence

After the 1783 Treaty of Paris there were 13 individual states

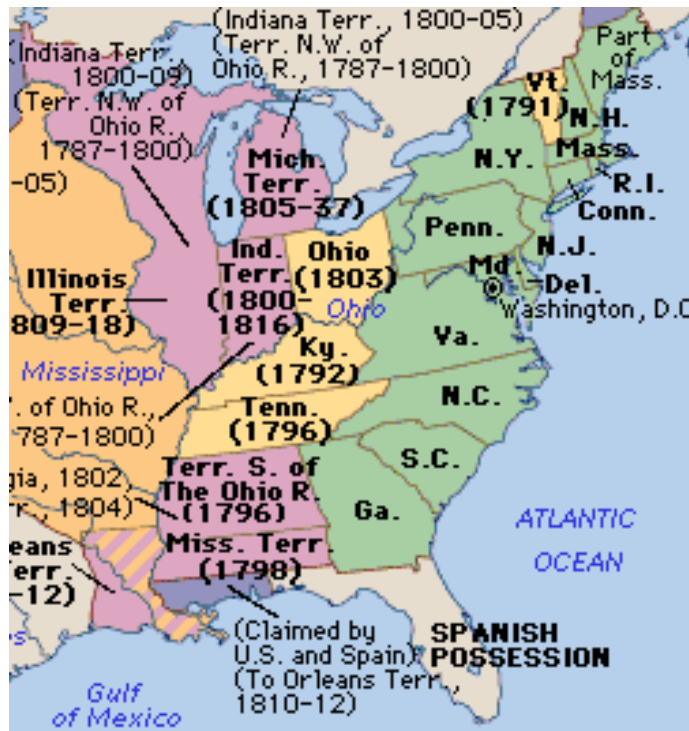
Each having 13 different governments united in a very loose association of the 13 states

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress made plans for a **confederation** or “brotherhood of states”



# Issues Facing the New U.S.

1. Debt from the Revolution (54m total)
2. No standing army or navy
3. Barbary Pirates harassing merchants in the Mediterranean
4. New territory in the NW
5. Domestic issues



# State Governments

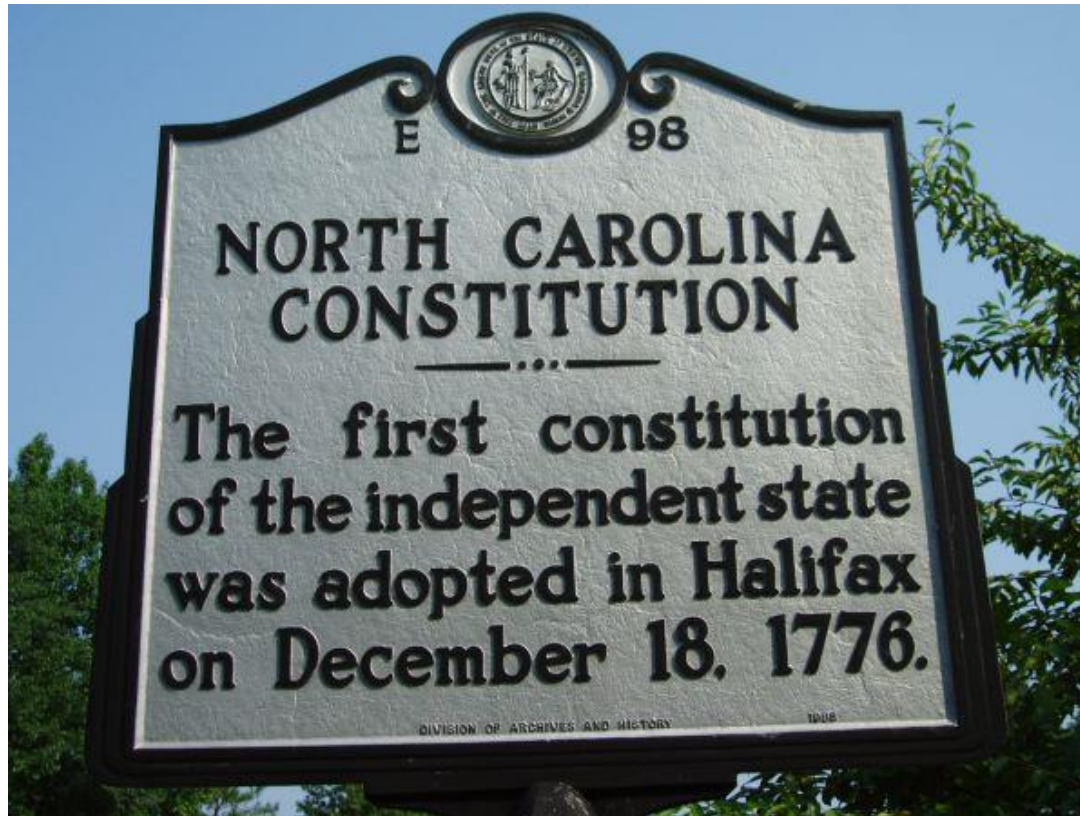
## **1. Every state wrote its own constitution (their set-up of how govt will run)**

Some decided not to have a governor, some allowed all tax-paying white men to vote, some allowed only property-owning white men to vote

## **2. Most had 3 branches:** Legislative (some sort of “assembly”), Executive (usually a governor), Judicial (court system)

## **3. Guaranteed certain rights; natural rights of their citizens**

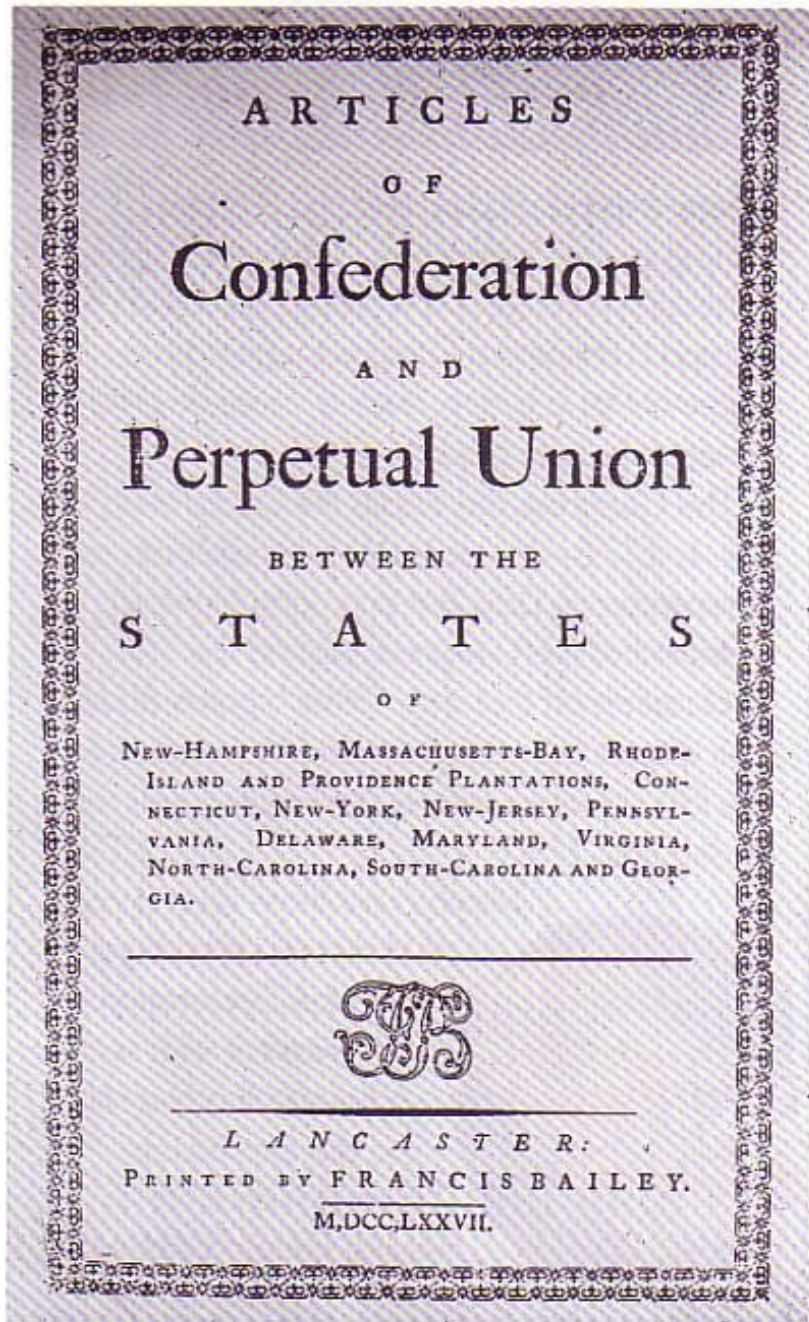
Used the Magna Carta & the English Bill of Rights as inspiration



# Need for Cooperation

1. Revolutionary War had created national and state debts and nation-wide inflation
  - Farmers affected most
2. Strength of the British military posed a threat to the future of the new nation
3. Weakness of the remaining military:  
“young” militia was all that remained after the A.R.





## National Government

-Needed some method of cooperation

Republican Confederation: govt in which each state organized their own govt and made their own laws that couldn't be overridden by the national govt

1. Limited control was given to the central govt bc of fear of absolutism/authoritarianism (**one person or group with absolute power that are NOT accountable to their people**)

This “plan” was called the Articles of Confederation and signed in 1781

## Articles of Confederation

1. One group of legislators (unicameral)
2. One vote given to each state; 9 of 13 states vote was required to pass federal laws
3. Congress had “control” over the army
4. Congress had the power to handle foreign relations on behalf of the states



## Achievements of the AoC

5. **Land Ordinance 1785**: lands past the Appalachians were declared new territories since the Treaty of Paris 1763 was now void; organized new territories into townships (1/16<sup>th</sup> had to be sold for public schools)
6. **NW Ordinance 1787**: banned slavery in NW areas and set up process of adding additional states

(OH, IN, IL, WI, MN, MI)

\*Giving the territories a path towards statehood addressed some future issues of sectionalism



# NORTHWEST ORDINANCES OF 1785 AND 1787

WISCONSIN  
(1848)

MICHIGAN  
(1837)

ILLINOIS  
(1818)

INDIANA  
(1816)

OHIO  
(1803)



Northwest Territory      Current international boundaries  
(1803) Year of statehood      Current state boundaries

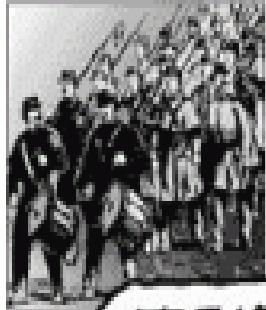
**One section = 640 acres (1 square mile)**  
 A — half section = 320 acres  
 B — quarter section = 160 acres  
 C — half-quarter section = 80 acres  
 D and E — quarter-quarter section = 40 acres





# Weaknesses of the AOC

## POWERS GRANTED BY THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION



- Congress could raise armies
- Congress could declare war



- Congress could sign treaties

## POWERS WITHHELD BY THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

- Congress could not raise revenue through taxes



- Congress could not regulate trade and collect tariffs



1. 9 out of 13 states had to approve to ratify a law → overwhelming majority made it difficult to pass laws
2. National government could not tax → payment of the national debt
3. No executive branch → no president/leader or branch that enforces laws passed by Congress
4. No federal/national court system → no way to settle disputes between states and tough to ensure fair federal trials
5. Could not regulate trade/no common currency → exchange rate issues, disputes between states
6. No national Army or Navy → Congress could “call on” states to contribute specific resources and numbers of men for the Army, not allowed to force states to obey their request for aid

## Problems Arise Quickly

Taxation: some state's were deeper in debt from the war than others →

States placed taxes on citizens (hurt rural farmers most)

**Shays' Rebellion** (Jan. 1787): armed group of MA farmers seized a federal arsenal to shut down the courts that were foreclosing on their farms; 4 farmers were killed and the rebellion was put down by volunteer troops the next day

**Impact: Congress realized the AoC made the federal govt too weak**

