CHAPTER 9

The Confederation and the Constitution, 1776–1790

PART I: REVIEWING THE CHAPTER

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain the broad movement toward social and political equality that flourished after the Revolution and indicate why certain social and racial inequalities remained in place.
2. Describe the government of the Articles of Confederation and summarize its achievements and failures.
3. Explain the crucial role of Shays’s Rebellion in sparking the movement for a new Constitution.
4. Describe the basic ideas and goals of the Founding Fathers in the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention and how they incorporated their fundamental principles into the Constitution.
5. Understand the central concerns that motivated the antifederalists, and indicate their social, economic, and political differences with the federalists.
6. Describe the issues at stake in the political fight over ratification of the Constitution between federalists and antifederalists, and explain why the federalists won.
7. Explain how the new government, set up by the Constitution, represented a conservative reaction to the American Revolution, yet at the same time, institutionalized the Revolution’s central radical principles of popular government and individual liberty.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. disestablish To separate an official state church from its connection with the government. “... the Protestant Episcopal church ... was everywhere disestablished.”
2. emancipation Setting free from servitude or slavery. “Several northern states ... provided for the gradual emancipation of blacks.”
3. chattel An article of personal or movable property; hence a term applied to slaves, since they were considered the personal property of their owners. “... a few idealistic masters freed their human chattels.”
4. abolitionist An advocate of the end of slavery. “In this ... were to be found the first frail sprouts of the later abolitionist movement.”
5. ratification The official confirmation or validation of a provisional governing document or act (such as a constitution) by authoritative approval. “Massachusetts ... submitted the final draft directly to the people for ratification.”
6. bill of rights A document guaranteeing certain fundamental freedoms assumed to be central to society. “Most of these documents included bills of rights ...”
7. speculators (speculation) Those who buy property, goods, or financial instruments not primarily to use them, but in anticipation of profitable resale after a general rise in value. “States seized control of former crown lands ... although rich speculators had their day.”
8. **township** In America, a surveyed territory six miles square; the term also refers to a unit of local government, smaller than a county, that is often based on these survey units. "The sixteenth section of each township was set aside to be sold for the benefit of the public schools..."

9. **territory** In American government, an organized political entity not yet enjoying the full and equal status of a state. "... when a territory could boast sixty thousand inhabitants, it might be admitted by Congress as a state. ...

10. **annex** To incorporate a smaller territory or political unit into a larger one. "They... sought to annex that rebellious area to Britain."

11. **requisition** A demand for something issued on the basis of public authority. "The requisition system of raising money was breaking down. ..."

12. **foreclosure** Seizing private, mortgaged property from the owner because the legal payments on the loan have not been kept up. "... Revolutionary war veterans were losing their farms through mortgage foreclosures."

13. **quorum** The minimum number of persons who must be present in a group before it can conduct valid business. "A quorum of the fifty-five emissaries from twelve states finally convened at Philadelphia. ...

14. **anarchy** The theory that formal government is unnecessary and wrong in principle; the term is also used generally for lawlessness or antigovernmental disorder. "Delegates were determined to preserve the union [and] forestall anarchy. ...

15. **bicameral, unicameral** Referring to a legislative body with two houses (bicameral) or one (unicameral). "... representation in both houses of a bicameral Congress should be based on population... "This provided for equal representation in a unicameral Congress. ...

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**PART II: CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS**

**A. True-False**

Where the statement is true, circle T; where it is false, circle F.

1. T F The American Revolution created a substantial, though not radical, push in the direction of social and political equality.

2. T F The movement toward the separation of church and state in America was greatly accelerated by the disestablishment of the Anglican church in Virginia.

3. T F The abolition of slavery in the North after the Revolution led to a strong movement for equal rights for free blacks.

4. T F The Revolutionary ideal of republican motherhood emphasized the central role of women in raising the selfless, virtuous citizens necessary to sustain self-government.

5. T F The state governments, established after the Revolution, created strong judicial and legislative branches of government as a check against popular misrule.

6. T F Speculation, profiteering, and inflation weakened the economy and spurred social discontent during the years under the Articles of Confederation (1781–1787).

7. T F The greatest failure of the national government, under the Articles of Confederation, was its inability to deal with the issue of western lands.

8. T F The U.S. Congress, under the Articles of Confederation, was extremely weak because it had no power to regulate commerce or impose taxes on the states.

9. T F The Northwest Ordinance, passed under the Articles of Confederation, established the western territories as permanent colonies of the federal government.

10. T F Shays's Rebellion significantly strengthened the movement for a stronger central government by raising fears that the United States was falling into anarchy and mobocracy.
Chapter 9: The Confederation and the Constitution, 1776–1790

11. T F The states sent their delegates to Philadelphia in 1787 for the purpose of discarding the Articles of Confederation and writing a new Constitution with a strong central government.

12. T F The delegates to the Constitutional Convention were a mix of wealthy landowners and merchants with poorer farmers, artisans, and laborers.

13. T F The Great Compromise between large and small states at the convention resulted in a House of Representatives based on population and a Senate with equal representation from all states.

14. T F The antifederalists opposed the Constitution, partly because they thought it gave too much power to the states and not enough to Congress.

15. T F The federalists used tough political maneuvering and the promise of a bill of rights to win a narrow ratification of the Constitution in key states.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. Among the important social changes brought about by the American Revolution was
   a. the abolition of slavery everywhere except in South Carolina and Georgia.
   b. a strong movement toward equality of property.
   c. an army where the soldiers elected their own officers.
   d. full equality and voting rights for women.
   e. the increasing separation of church and state.

2. A major new political innovation that emerged in the Revolutionary era was the
   a. election of legislative representatives capable of voting on taxation.
   b. shifting of power from the legislative to the executive branch of government.
   c. idea of a written constitution drafted by a convention and ratified by direct vote of the people.
   d. extension of voting rights to indentured servants.
   e. direct election of judges by the people.

3. Despite the Revolution’s emphasis on human rights and equality, the Founding Fathers failed to abolish slavery because
   a. they saw it as necessary to maintain American power.
   b. they feared black rebellion if slavery were removed.
   c. of their fear that a flight over slavery would destroy fragile national unity.
   d. almost none of them believed that slavery was wrong.
   e. many of them felt guilty about interracial sexual liaisons with their slaves.

4. The ideal of republican motherhood that emerged from the American Revolution held that
   a. women should be rewarded politically for having helped establish the American republic.
   b. women had a special responsibility to cultivate the civic virtues of republicanism in their children.
   c. the government should establish social services to help mothers raise their children.
   d. mothers should be granted full political and economic rights in the American republic.
   e. mothers had a responsibility to teach principles of equality to their daughters as well as sons.

5. The fundamental difference between ordinary laws and a constitution that emerged from the American Revolution was that ordinary laws
   a. described specific illegal acts, while a constitution granted positive rights.
   b. addressed economic questions, while a constitution addressed the distribution of political power.
   c. could be passed and repealed by legislatures, while a constitution was a fundamental law ratified by the people and superior to all legislation.
   d. applied to the states; a constitution was a document of the federal government.
   e. were approved by the people, while a constitution emerged from the decisions of judges.
6. One way that American independence actually harmed the nation's economic fortunes was by
   a. ending British trade and investment in America.
   b. abolishing the stable currency system that had existed under the empire.
   c. creating too much taxation and regulation by the federal government in Philadelphia.
   d. weakening the manufacturing efforts begun under the British.
   e. cutting off American trade with the British empire.
7. Attempts to establish strong governments in post-Revolutionary America were seriously hindered by the
   a. lack of strong leadership available in the new nation.
   b. revolutionary ideology that preached natural rights and suspicion of all governmental authority.
   c. hostility of the clergy toward the idea of separation of church and state.
   d. fear that a strong government would suppress economic development.
   e. seizure of power by dangerous demagogues like Daniel Shays.
8. The first U.S. government of the Articles of Confederation was finally approved when
   a. George Washington insisted that he needed a single ruling authority to deal with.
   b. land-rich states like Virginia and New York agreed to hand over their lands to the new government for
      the common benefit.
   c. Congress abandoned the principle that each state had one vote regardless of size.
   d. the economy was plunged into severe depression that required drastic action.
   e. Britain refused to honor the Peace of Paris by holding onto its forts in the West.
9. The greatest weakness of the government under the Articles of Confederation was that
   a. it was unable to deal with the issue of western lands.
   b. it was still too subservient to America's ally, France.
   c. it had no power to establish relations with foreign governments.
   d. there was no judicial branch to balance the legislative and executive branches.
   e. it had no power to regulate commerce or collect taxes from the sovereign states.
10. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provided that
    a. the states should retain permanent control of their western lands.
    b. money from the sale of western lands should be used to promote manufacturing.
    c. after sufficient population growth, western territories could be organized and then join the union as
        states.
    d. the settlers in the northwest could vote on whether or not they should have slavery.
    e. the Old Northwest states should have permanent access to the Great Lakes water.
11. Shays's Rebellion contributed greatly to the movement for a new constitution by
    a. revealing that Revolutionary War veterans like Shays wanted a more powerful federal government.
    b. raising the fear of anarchy and disorder among wealthy conservatives.
    c. raising the prospect of British or French interference in American domestic affairs.
    d. showing that state legislatures could effectively resist the demands of radical farmers.
    e. proving that America needed a stronger military to crush domestic rebellions.
12. Besides George Washington, the most influential delegates to the Constitutional Convention were
    d. Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton.
13. The Great Compromise, finally agreed to by the Constitutional Convention, provided that
    a. the House of Representatives would be elected by the people and the Senate by the state legislatures.
    b. the large states would be taxed on the basis of population and the small states on the basis of territory.
    c. there would be separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government.
    d. there would be representation by population in the House of Representatives but equal representation of
       all states in the Senate.
    e. slavery would continue to be permitted in the South but not in the North.
82 Chapter 9: The Confederation and the Constitution, 1776–1790
14. Antifederalists generally found their greatest support among
   a. residents of small states like Delaware and New Jersey.
   b. the commercial areas of the eastern seaboard.
   c. former Loyalists and others who disliked American Revolutionary ideals.
   d. the wealthy and well educated.
   e. the poorer debtors and farmers.
15. The crucial federalist successes in the fight for ratification occurred in the states of
   a. Georgia, Maryland, and Delaware.
   b. Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York.
   d. Connecticut, South Carolina, and New Hampshire.
   e. Kentucky, Tennessee, and Vermont.

C. Identification
Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. _________ New name for the Anglican Church after it was disestablished and de-
   Anglicized in Virginia and elsewhere
2. _________ The idea that American women had a special responsibility to cultivate civic
   virtue in their children
3. _________ A type of special assembly, originally developed in Massachusetts, for drawing
   up a fundamental law that would be superior to ordinary law
4. _________ The first constitutional government of the United States
5. _________ The territory north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River that
   came to be governed by the Confederation's acts of 1785 and 1787
6. _________ In the new Northwest territories, six-mile by six-mile square areas consisting
   of thirty-six sections, one of which was set aside for public schools
7. _________ The status of a western area under the Northwest Ordinance after it established
   an organized government but before it became a state
8. _________ A failed revolt in 1786 by poor debtor farmers that raised fears of mobocracy
9. _________ The large-state plan proposed to the Constitutional Convention by which
   representation both houses of the federal legislature would be based on
   population
10. _________ The small-state plan proposed to the Constitutional Convention by which every
    state would have completely equal representation in a unicameral legislature
11. _________ The Constitutional compromise between North and South that resulted in each
    slave being counted as 60 percent of a free person for purposes of
    representation in Congress
12. _________ The opponents of the Constitution who argued against creating such a strong
    central government
13. _________ A masterly series of pro-Constitution articles printed in New York by Jay,
    Madison, and Hamilton
14. _________ The official under the new Constitution who would be commander-in-chief of
    the armed forces, appoint judges and other officials, and have the power to veto
    legislation
15. _________ A list of guarantees that federalists promised to add to the Constitution in order
    to win ratification
D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

1. __ Society of the Cincinnati
2. __ Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
3. __ Articles of Confederation
4. __ Northwest Ordinance of 1787
5. __ Benjamin Franklin
6. __ Daniel Shays
7. __ George Washington
8. __ James Madison
9. __ federalists
10. __ antifederalists
11. __ Patrick Henry
12. __ Alexander Hamilton
13. __ John Jay
14. __ Samuel Adams
15. __ *The Federalist*

a. Group that failed to block the central government they feared but did force the promise of a bill of rights
b. Father of the Constitution and author of *Federalist* No. 10
c. An exclusive order of military officers that aroused strong democratic opposition
d. Wealthy conservatives devoted to republicanism who engineered a nonviolent political transformation
e. Legislation passed by an alliance of Jefferson and the Baptists that disestablished the Anglican church
f. Revolutionary War veteran who led poor farmers in a revolt that failed but had far-reaching consequences
g. Revered elder statesman whose prestige in the Constitutional Convention helped facilitate the Great Compromise
h. Brilliant book of essays by Madison, Hamilton, and Jay that helped sway critical support for the Constitution in New York
i. Frustrated foreign affairs secretary under the Articles; one of the three authors of *The Federalist*
j. Legislation that provided for the orderly transformation of western territories into states
k. Leading Massachusetts radical during the American Revolution who led the opposition to the Constitution in his state in 1787
l. Virginia antifederalist leader who thought the Constitution spelled the end of liberty and equality
m. Unanimously elected chairman of the secret convention of demi-gods
n. Young New Yorker who argued eloquently for the Constitution even though he favored an even stronger central government
o. Original American governmental charter of 1781 that was put out of business by the Constitution