

The Northwest Ordinance; July 13, 1787



The Northwest Ordinance was a law passed by Congress in 1787 to provide for government of the Northwest Territory, located north of the Ohio River and west of Pennsylvania to the Mississippi River. Soon after its passage, settlers flocked westward and created new towns and farms throughout the territory.

Directions - Answer the questions on your own paper using complete sentences. Read the text and then and the question(s) that follows.

An Ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States northwest of the River Ohio.

Sec. 9. So soon as there shall be five thousand free male inhabitants of full age in the district, upon giving proof thereof to the governor, they shall receive authority, with time and place, to elect a representative from their counties or townships to represent them in the general assembly: Provided, That, for every five hundred free male inhabitants, there shall be one representative, and so on progressively with the number of free male inhabitants shall the right of representation increase, until the number of representatives shall amount to twenty five; after which, the number and proportion of representatives shall be regulated by the legislature: Provided, That no person be eligible or qualified to act as a representative unless he shall have been a citizen of one of the United States three years, and be a resident in the district, or unless he shall have resided in the district three years; and, in either case, shall likewise hold in his own right, in fee simple, two hundred acres of land within the same; Provided, also, That a freehold in fifty acres of land in the district, having been a citizen of one of the states, and being resident in the district, or the like freehold and two years residence in the district, shall be necessary to qualify a man as an elector of a representative. (Answer questions 1 and 2)

1. What had to happen before a county or township could elect a representative?

2. What qualifications were needed to be a representative?

Art. 3. Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them. (Answer question 3)

3. How were the Indians in the Northwest Territory supposed to be treated?

Art. 5. There shall be formed in the said territory, not less than three nor more than five States; and the boundaries of the States, as soon as Virginia shall alter her act of cession, and consent to the same, shall become fixed and established as follows, to wit: The western State in the said territory, shall be bounded by the Mississippi, the Ohio, and Wabash Rivers; a direct line drawn from the Wabash and Post Vincents, due North, to the territorial line between the United States and Canada; and, by the said territorial line, to the Lake of the Woods and Mississippi. The middle State shall be bounded by the said direct line, the Wabash from Post Vincents to the Ohio, by the Ohio, by a direct line, drawn due north from the mouth of the Great Miami, to the said territorial line, and by the said territorial line. The eastern State shall be bounded by the last mentioned direct line, the Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the said territorial line: Provided, however, and it is further understood and declared, that the boundaries of these three States shall be subject so far to be altered, that, if Congress shall hereafter find it expedient, they shall have authority to form one or two States in that part of the said territory which lies north of an east and west line drawn through the southerly bend or extreme of Lake Michigan. And, whenever any of the said States shall have sixty thousand free inhabitants therein, such State shall be admitted, by its delegates, into the Congress of the United States, on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever, and shall be at liberty to form a permanent constitution and State government: Provided, the constitution and government so to be formed, shall be republican, and in conformity to the principles contained in these articles; and, so far as it can be consistent with the general interest of the confederacy, such admission shall be allowed at an earlier period, and when there may be a less number of free inhabitants in the State than sixty thousand.

(Answer question 4)

4. How many inhabitants [people who live in a place] would a territory need to become a state?

Art. 6. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: Provided, always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.

Be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the resolutions of the 23rd of April, 1784, relative to the subject of this ordinance, be, and the same are hereby repealed and declared null and void.

Done by the United States, in Congress assembled, the 13th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1787, and of their sovereignty and independence the twelfth.

(Answer question 5)

5. How was the issue of slavery dealt with?



The Northwest Ordinance of 1787

FOR SEVEN YEARS THE 13 AMERICAN STATES HAVE A GOVERNMENT ORGANIZED BY THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION — BUT THE STATES DON'T WORK TOGETHER. THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IS WEAK AND LOW ON MONEY. THE NORTHWEST ORDINANCE IS ONE OF ITS FEW SUCCESSES. THE ORDINANCE (LAW) PROMISES TO SETTLERS:



FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP



RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL FOR ANYONE ACCUSED OF A CRIME



NO CRUEL OR UNUSUAL PUNISHMENTS FOR A CRIME



NO SLAVERY IN THIS TERRITORY

THE ORDINANCE ALSO DESCRIBES HOW TERRITORIES WILL BECOME OFFICIAL STATES. . .

MANY OF THESE IDEAS SHOW UP LATER IN THE BILL OF RIGHTS DRAFTED FOR THE NEW UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION (WHICH REPLACES THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION).

WHEN THE POPULATION OF THE AREA IS JUST A FEW SETTLERS, THEIR GOVERNMENT IS:



A GOVERNOR APPOINTED BY CONGRESS



A SECRETARY APPOINTED BY CONGRESS



THREE JUDGES APPOINTED BY CONGRESS



WHEN THE POPULATION HAS 5,000 FREE MEN, THOSE MEN MAY ELECT A TWO-PART LEGISLATURE.



THE GOVERNOR HAS VETO POWER OVER THE LEGISLATURE



SECRETARY



JUDGES



LEGISLATURE



WHEN THE AREA HAS 60,000 FREE PEOPLE, THE LEGISLATURE CAN WRITE A STATE CONSTITUTION FOR CONGRESS TO APPROVE.



NOW YOU ARE IN A STATE!

IN 1803, OHIO IS THE FIRST STATE CREATED USING THESE RULES. FIVE OTHER STATES ARE LATER FORMED FROM THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY ABOVE THE OHIO RIVER: INDIANA, ILLINOIS, MICHIGAN, WISCONSIN, AND MINNESOTA.



SOON STEAMBOATS ARE CARRYING PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS UP AND DOWN THE OHIO RIVER WHERE ONLY INDIAN CANOES TRAVELED 100 YEARS BEFORE.

END

1. How many men does it take for a two-part legislature to be elected?
2. What can the territory do when the population reaches 60,000?
3. What is the first state created using the rules of the Northwest Ordinance?
4. How many other states are formed?
5. Who inhabited the lands before they were divided up by the United States?