



Federal Constitution Making

American Heritage Discussion Series for Learners with Littles

Essential Questions

1. What ideas and events influenced the delegates at the 1787 Constitutional Convention?

2. What were some of the arguments supporting the new federal constitution?

Haudenosaunee

Articles of Confederation

Constitutional Convention

Ratification

The Great Peace Giver and The Great Law of Peace

The Peacemaker's Journey & The Great Law of Peace by the Onondaga Historical Association, Senate Resolution 331 (1988)

Essential Question: What influence did the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) have on the U.S. Constitution?

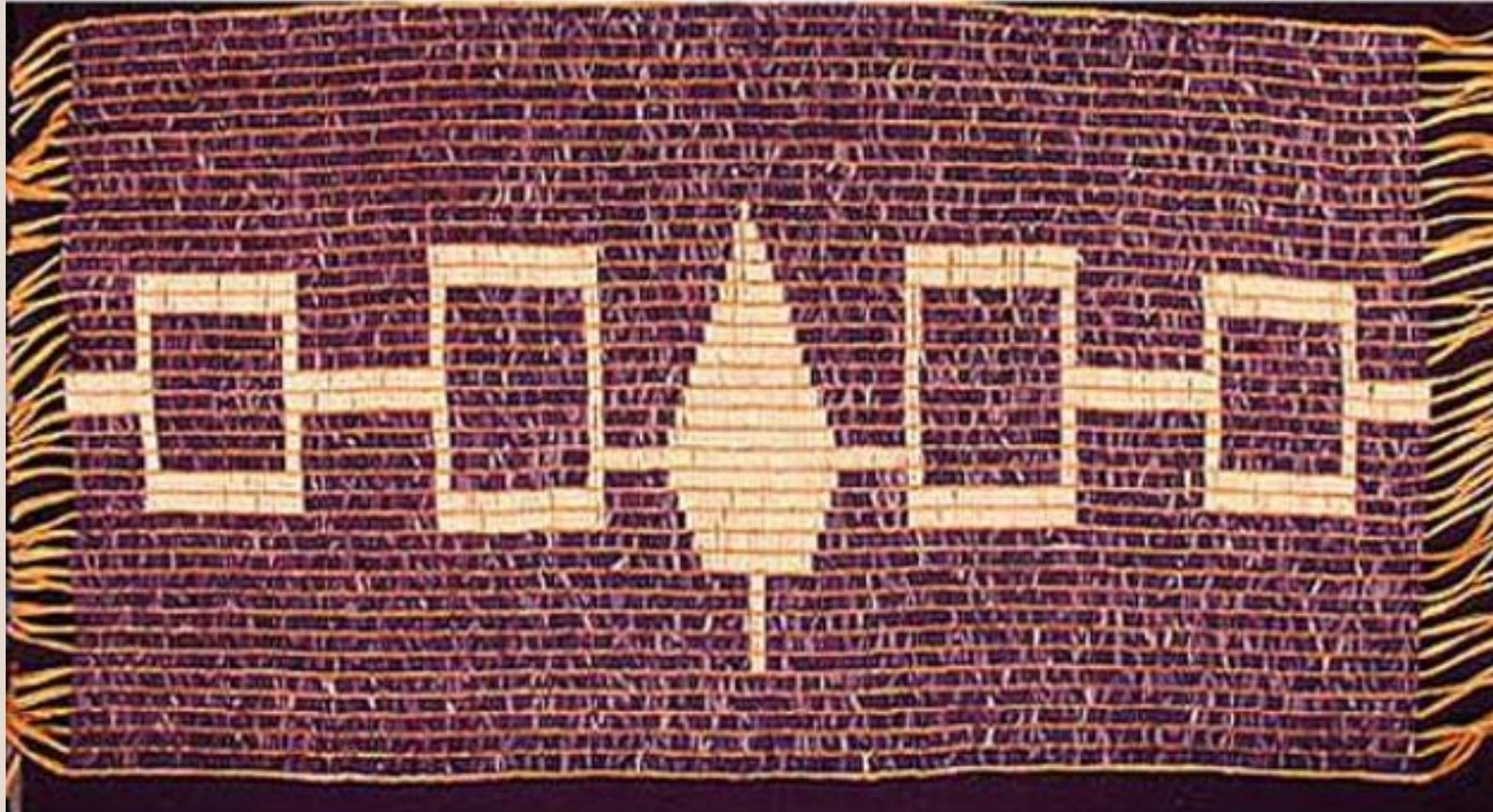
- What is the founding story of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy)?
- What was The Great Law of Peace?
- How did the United States Senate recognize the influence of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) on the U.S. Constitution?



The Great Peace Giver and The Great Law of Peace



Iroquois Confederacy (aka Haudenosaunee)



Iroquois Confederacy and the Framers

- When the Framers of the Constitution were looking for examples of successful government, the Iroquois Confederacy was one of the successful examples they knew about.
- Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and John Adams each knew about the Iroquois Confederacy as an example of federalism when they were working on designing a new government for the United States.
- In 1988 the United States Senate officially recognized the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the Constitution.



Iroquois Confederacy and the Framers

100TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 331

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 5 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 26), 1988

Received and referred to the Select Committee on Indian Affairs

OCTOBER 21 (legislative day, OCTOBER 18), 1988

Committee discharged

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To acknowledge the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the United States Constitution and to reaffirm the continuing government-to-government relationship between Indian tribes and the United States established in the Constitution.

Whereas the original framers of the Constitution, including, most notably, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, are known to have greatly admired the concepts of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy;

Whereas the confederation of the original Thirteen Colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the Constitution itself; and

Articles of Confederation

Articles of Confederation by Extra History

Essential Question: What issues emerged after the War of Independence that made the American victory and the union precarious?

- What governmental issues did the new United States have under the Articles of Confederation?



The video player displays a graphic with a stack of papers on the left labeled "ARTICLES - of - CONFEDERATION". To the right is a map of the United States with a red prohibition sign over a gavel, indicating state sovereignty. A white arrow points from the papers to the map. Below the graphic, a black box contains the text "The Articles of Confederation left each state free". The video player interface shows a progress bar at 5:32 / 11:15 and various control icons.

The Articles of Confederation left each state free

The Articles of Confederation - Constitutional Convention - Extra History - Part 4

Constitutional Convention

Excerpts from the Debates in the 1787 Constitutional Convention concerning the Slave Importation Clause.

Essential Question: Was it possible to create a union that included the southern states without making accommodations for slavery?

- What were some of the views about slavery some of the delegates expressed in the Constitutional Convention while debating the possible end to the Transatlantic Slave Trade?



Franklin on the Constitution's Errors

Benjamin Franklin's Closing Speech at the Constitutional Convention

Essential Question: How does Franklin encourage support for the new constitution?

- Why does Benjamin Franklin “give his consent” to the new federal constitution, while also acknowledging it contains errors?
- What does Franklin encourage others to do while considering the proposed constitution?

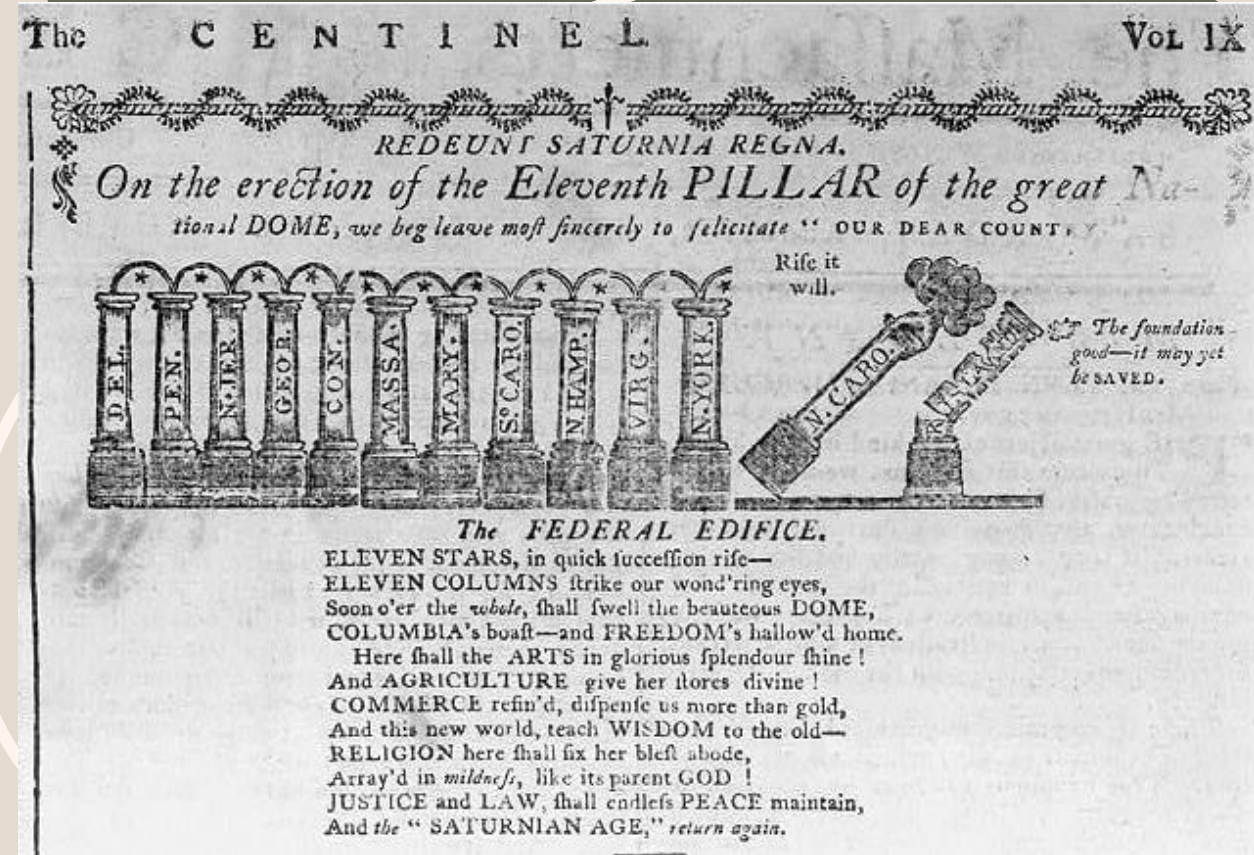


Getting the New Constitution Ratified Back Home

Excerpt from Federalist 51 by Publius

Essential Question: What are some arguments that supported the proposed constitution?

- What is the main argument of Federalist 51?
- What does this famous line from Federalist 51 mean: “If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.”



Preamble

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.