



One of the most important writings in US history is the Declaration of Independence. It was written in 1776. Before this document, there was no U.S.A. There were only 13 colonies that Britain controlled and the people were British citizens.



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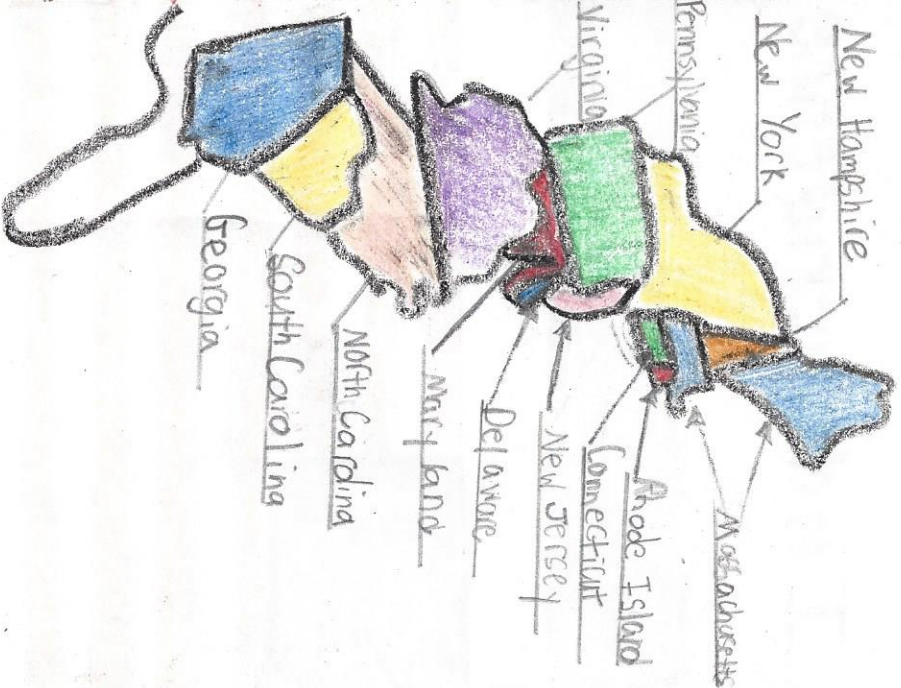
Declaration

of

Independence



The Original 13 Colonies



* Colonists wanted independence because the king had been unfair and they believed that a government should protect people's rights and listen to the people.

Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the Declaration. It took him 17 days. This document is the first time the words "United States of America" was used.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal."

* America became independent when the Declaration was approved on July 4th. Due to the efforts of the brave men that met and wrote it, we are still free today. They made difficult sacrifices that I hope I'd be willing to make in order to make changes for the better.

Life, Liberty, + the Pursuit of Happiness

Introduction

The Declaration of Independence was known as the "document that started it all". The document, adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, stated that the thirteen American colonies were no longer part of the British Empire, but that they were free and independent states.

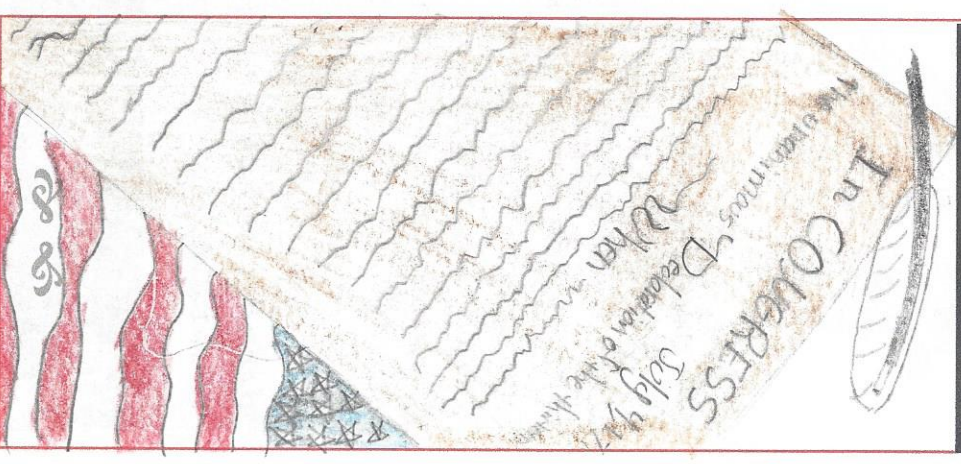
This declaration would change the course of American history and help define our country, as we know it today.



G



The Declaration of Independence





Thomas Jefferson was known as the writer of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was a founding father, and he was also the third president of the United States. Jefferson was a true patriot; he served his country for over five decades with pride, honor, and humility.

Thomas Jefferson

Birth of a Nation

The state motto of New Hampshire is "Live Free or Die". This philosophy was handed down to us from our founding fathers. After many years of taxation without representation and protested rules imposed upon the colonies by the British motherland, the colonies had reached a boiling point. On July 4, 1776, The Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

This statement from the Declaration shows that the founding fathers believed that equality and freedom were indeed worth fighting for. These men knew that this document would lead to war, and all of the sacrifices that inevitably come with war. The battles of the American

Revolution would commence a short time later.

The Declaration of Independence forced the countries of the world to recognize the colonies of the United States as a sovereign entity. This new status as an independent and separate nation allowed the United States to begin to make alliances with other friendly countries. One such key alliance was with France. This alliance would prove extremely valuable during the American Revolution, as France was an instrumental supporter of the United States during this conflict with Britain. Without France, there is a great likelihood that the US would not have been able to successfully break free from Britain.

These brave men were willing to sacrifice all for the chance to become a free nation. Their bravery resulted in the freedoms we enjoy today.



DEAR GEORGE...

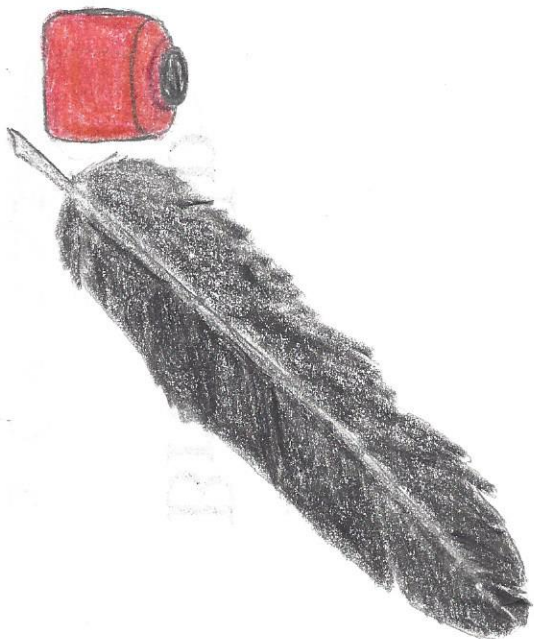
The Declaration of
Independence was sort of
a "break up" letter. The
Colonies were breaking
up with Great Britain.
They could have started
the letter with, "It's not
me; it's you." One might
ask why this happened...



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The Break Up





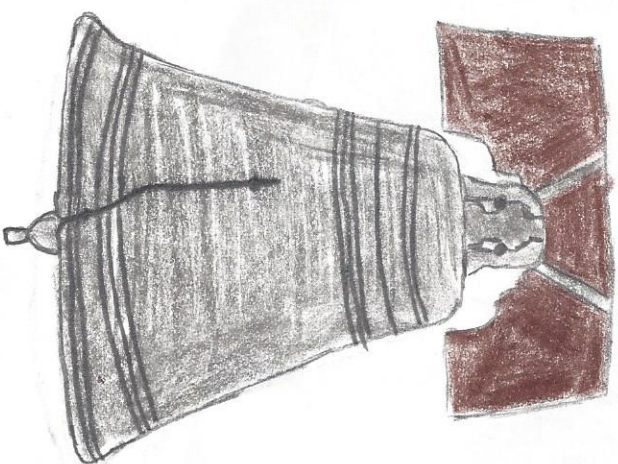
The Declaration of Independence

was a written statement of separation from Britain.

- Written by Thomas Jefferson
- Signed July 4, 1776
- In Philadelphia, PA
- Can now be found in The National Archives Building in Washington, DC

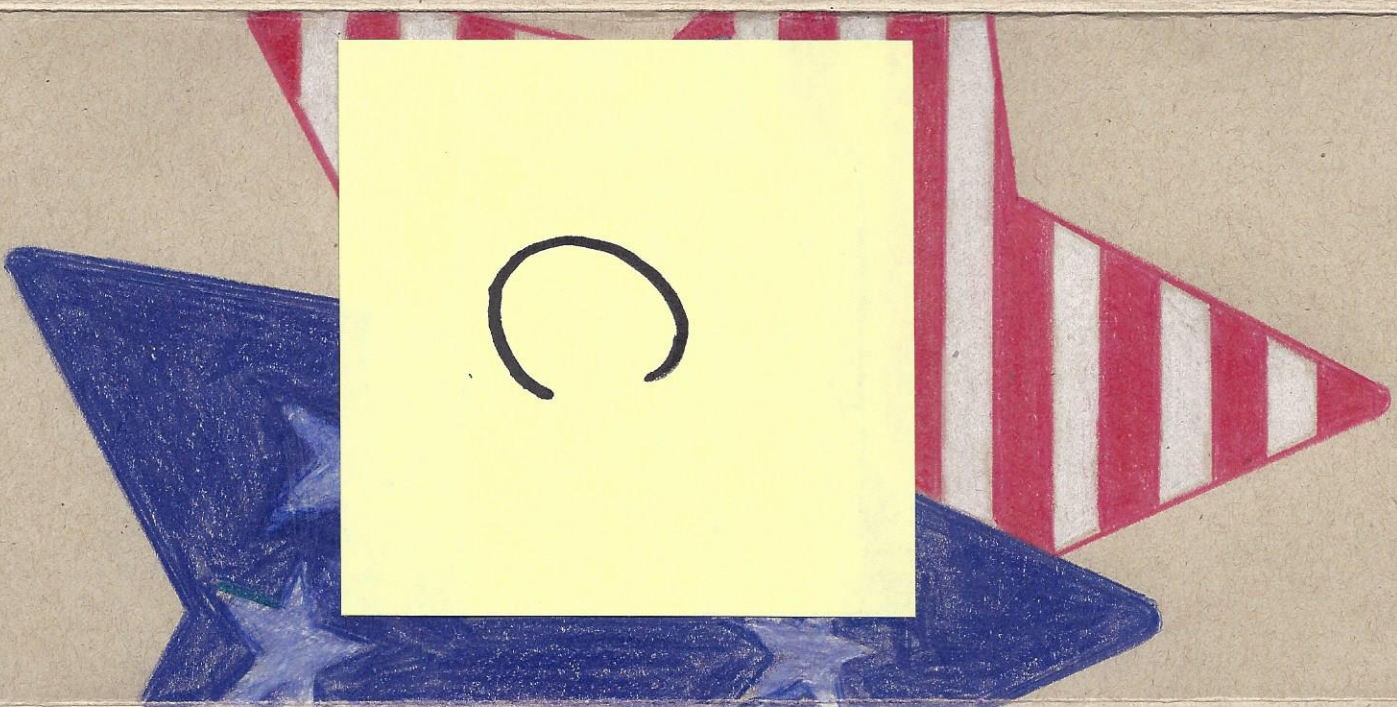
The Colonists had been upset with Britain taxing them and wanting to use the money to keep soldiers in the Colonies. Plus, the Colonies had no voice when it came to whether or not to tax them. Things like The Stamp Act (1766) and the Tea Act (1773) eventually led to the revolt called the Boston Tea Party (1774). In response to this, Britain made things worse for the Colonists like blocking the harbors and saying that the Colonists had to let British soldiers live in their homes whether they wanted them there or not. Eventually, the individual colonies started putting militias together and on April 19, 1775, the first shot of the American Revolution was fired. The Colonists saw this as them defending themselves as British citizens, but King George III saw it as a colonial revolt. The Colonists did not want war and tried to negotiate with Parliament for their rights, but instead Britain sent German mercenaries to help fight against the Colonists. In January of 1776 Thomas Paine published his book, Common Sense which was passed around the colonies and helped convince the people that independence from Britain was the only answer. As a result, the colonies began writing Constitutions of their own and Thomas Jefferson and some other men began writing The Declaration of Independence. On July 4, 1776 the declaration was ready and was adopted by 12 colonies. This was 442 days after the American Revolution had begun.

The declaration would eventually be signed by 56 men and the 13th colony eventually approved of it as well. The largest signature (so that King George III would be sure to see it) was by John Hancock who was also the president of the Continental Congress. Two future Presidents of the United States also signed the document: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. This was a very brave thing to do especially considering the fact that there was a price on Hancock's head and others as traitors. This was viewed as treason by the king. Several signers were captured and tortured to death, many had their homes burned, some had sons die in the war, and several others fought and died themselves. The American Revolution would last about 5 years in all and it would not be until 1883 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris that "America" would officially be free.





The Bill of Rights not only
guaranteed essential rights
and protections for
individuals, but it was also the
key to uniting thirteen colonies
into one nation.



Bill of Rights
United States

Congress of the
United States

August 1789

What Would

America Look Like

Without the

Bill of Rights?

I Religion; Speech; Press; Assembly; Petition
Seizures or Warrants Without Cause

A Different Nation

Without the Bill of Rights, America would look more like Europe. It would consist of separate country states, with individual governments and customs.



Free from Britain, the skirmishes in the newly formed United States of America were not quite finished. Many obstacles lay in the path of the states ability to coexist harmoniously with one another. In effect, each state viewed themselves as an independent and sovereign nation. The challenge was to create a federal government that could balance the welfare and protection of the whole, while steadfastly protecting the autonomy of each state and, most importantly, the rights of individual citizens.

II Militia; Keep and Bear Arms **III** No Quartering of Soldiers **IV** No Unreasonable Searches or
Due Process of Law; No Double Jeopardy; No Self Incrimination; No Public Seizure of Property

At the heart of the matter was the centralized government. All agreed that one was needed, however there was no consensus on the degree of dominion it would have over the states. James Madison, a representative from Massachusetts, proposed modifying the Constitution with a series of amendments which would specify rights that would be guaranteed to individual citizens. Rights that could not be altered by either the central government or the state governments. Since these same ideas had been proposed earlier, by George Mason of Virginia, large and small states alike agreed to develop the ideas into firm resolutions.



The First Amendment was written as a solemn guarantee for the freedom of religion, press, speech, assembly, and the right of petition for individual citizens. With the assurance that free men would be able to pray as they wished, to speak candidly, and to assemble in protest of the government, states like Rhode Island became convinced that the individual and collective voice of the citizens would never be silenced. Nine states ratified the constitution with the addition of the First Amendment.

Fears remained over a central government imposing a tyrannical hand on citizens. The Fourth through Eighth Amendments set forth, in clear language, the terms under which the government could pursue legal action against an individual. With assurances of fair trials, punishments, and security for life and property, more states were ready to ratify the Constitution. The states wanted to keep this new government fair and honest.

Some states withheld ratification until the Tenth Amendment had been added. Larger states, like New York, wanted to keep the majority of their power with the states, while the smaller states, like Massachusetts, wanted to unite and give all of their power to the central government. An affirmative amendment, the Tenth Amendment assured all states, large and small, that the federal government could not take any power or rights from any states unless expressly given those privileges in the Constitution.

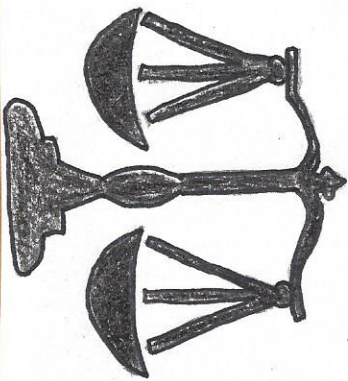
With ten amendments agreed upon, the Constitution was ratified unanimously and the nation truly became the United States of America.



V Speedy and Public Trial; Face Accusers; Legal Counsel **VII** Jury Decisions Shall Stand **VIII** Reasonable Bail; No Cruel and Unusual Punishment
IX Rights Not Given to the United States Shall be Retained by the People **X** Powers Not Given to the United States are Reserved to the States, or to the People

TODAY

Today the Federalist Papers are still very important. Today it is used for anyone who wants to understand the Constitution. Also they are used as an outline to motivate new ideas about the government. Another thing they are used for is in court to make the rulings on the cases. Today a copy of the Federalist Papers is at the Library of Congress.



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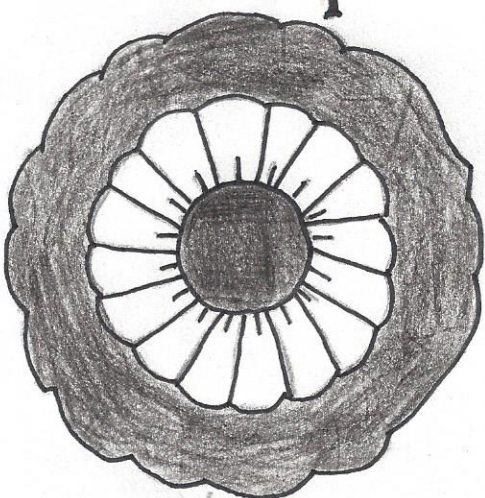
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SEPTEMBER 17, 1787

FEDERALIST Papers



Alexander
Hamilton

James
Madison

John
Jay

WHAT WAS IT?

During 1787 and 1788 a series of 85 essays were written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay called the Federalist Papers. The Federalist Papers were published and signed under the pseudonym "Publius". They were used to update the public about the Constitution. 77 of the essays were written in the Independent Journal, the New York Packet, and the Daily Advertiser around Oct. 1787 and Aug. 1788. The final 8 were added later. The papers were also found in a book called The Federalist.



AUTHORS

Before Hamilton, and Jay became part of Washington's cabinet they wrote the Federalist Papers along with Madison. To write the Federalist Papers the 3 men looked at the Constitution very closely. Also Hamilton and Madison went to the Constitutional Convention which helped give insight about the Constitution. They wanted the papers to help convince the New York delegate to vote for ratifying the Constitution and to update the public. Although the Federalist Papers did not play a big role in their decision, but it was still an important document.



Madison



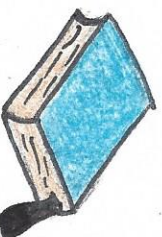
Hamilton



Jay

FUN FACTS

- It was written in the spirit both of propaganda and a logical argument
- The authorship was secret until Hamilton's death
- Written in "Publius" in honor of the Roman Publius Valerius Publicola.
- Jefferson acquired the papers intended to replace the Articles of Confederation



Introduction:

The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution. The Bill of Rights was a promise from James Madison to the American people that originally did not agree with or like the Constitution. James Madison, also known as the "Father of the Constitution", wrote the Bill of Right. James Madison proposed nineteen amendments to the first ever United States Congress, and they sent twelve of the amendments to the states. On December 15, 1791, ten of the proposed amendments became part of the Constitution. Originally the founders of the Constitution believed it was strong and well written enough to explain what the Bill of Rights said.



I

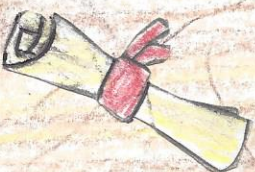


Bill of Rights

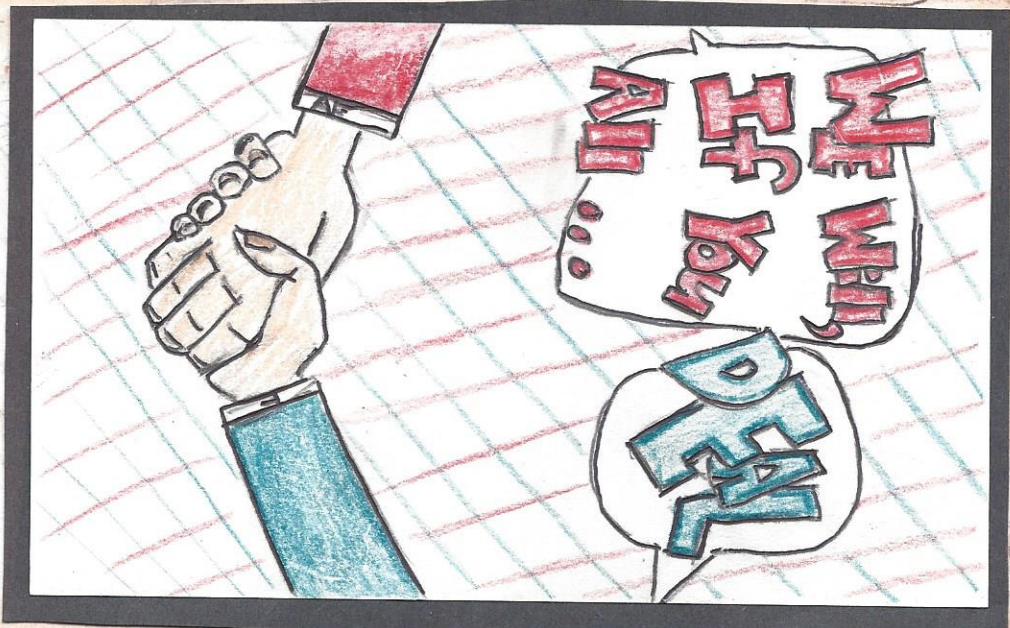


What else...

After the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution many more amendments were proposed and then added. The amendments that are included into the Bill of Rights are the basic human rights to all americans in the United States. There are twenty-seven amendments currently included into the Bill of Rights. The outcome of the Bill of Rights was definitely tremendous towards the American citizens, and it was this because it allowed Americans to be free from thought that their human rights would be taken from them.



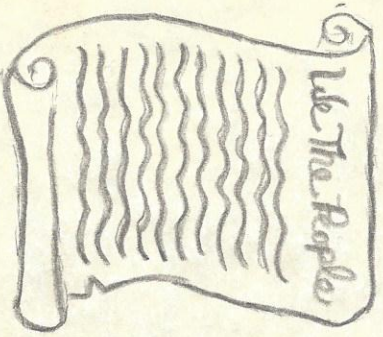
What motivated these greatly appreciated historians was the drive for American freedom, for not only them, but all Americans. Personally for James Madison, the motivation was that he thought that it was his job to take action and write the Bill of Rights and makes sure it was added to the constitution. Honestly it is a real mystery whether or not I could do what they did. All I can say is if I were alive back then I most likely would have had the same opinions as they did, and I would at least try to do what they did for the same reason they had did it.



Before the Massachusetts ratifying convention would accept the Constitution, the document's Federalist supporters had to promise to create a Bill of Rights to be amended to the Constitution immediately upon the creation of the new government, and this is what is being shown in the picture above.

The U.S. Constitution

The U.S. Constitution is one of the most recognized and well-known documents in our history. This document was created to be the ultimate guide for running the country. The Convention of fifty-five delegates, many of whom became known as the Founding Fathers, is where ideas for the constitution took shape. The delegates were visionaries and the document they created became much more than just a document. Along the way, there was much compromise, brainstorming, changes, and more compromise. The end product became known as the U.S. Constitution and it served as a template for our great democracy as well as a guide for human rights. Our constitution is the result of hard work, struggle, and negotiation hat our willing Founding Fathers put together to ensure a stable and fair government.



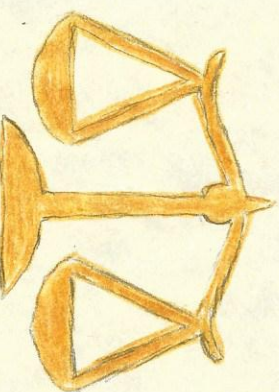
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THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

"The Constitution is the guide
which I will never abandon."

- George Washington



"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."

- James Madison

The Founding Fathers Work for Compromise

Delegates from the colonies were nothing short of desperate to create an independent union with a government powerful enough to maintain peace and independence. When the Constitutional Convention took place between May and September 1787, the overriding themes were sacrifice and compromise. The Founding Fathers were forced to be open minded, goal oriented, and humble in their pursuit to overcome their differences so that the U.S. Constitution could take form.

The delegates each arrived in Philadelphia, PA with a number of ideas as to how our government would be organized. Certainly, not all of their ideas were the same at the beginning. Along the way, compromises and revisions took place. The most notable, The Great Compromise, took pieces of what were considered the two most reasonable plans and ended up with the best plan. The Virginia Plan, which proposed the three essential branches (judicial, legislative and executive) and two houses of representation, and the New Jersey Plan with three branches and one house, were essentially combined. And the end product has endured since its creation.

A Great Democracy is Born

Along with the Great Compromise, the delegates at the Constitutional Convention faced more struggle. These struggles would ultimately lead us to an even larger conflict more than 100 years later. The Southern states were worried about how their slave population would be represented in the federal government. Therefore, the three-fifths compromise was born. With the settlement to satisfy the Southern delegates, the Southern states were allowed to count slaves as 3/5 of a vote for government representation. The delegates knew that their document would not be perfect but it had to withstand.

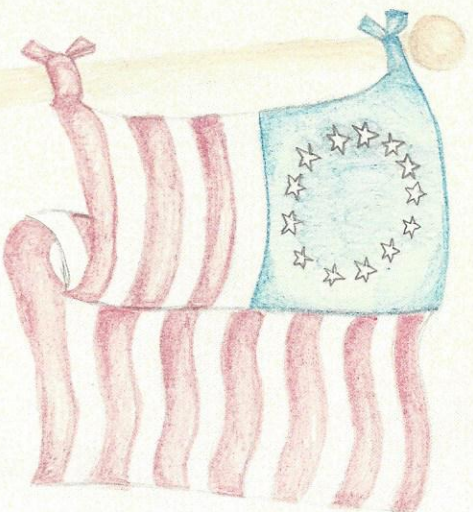
The Founding Fathers all shared an intense determination for success. There was no other option at the time. They all agreed on the immediate need for a fair and sound government based on freedom and, most importantly, compromise. We continue even today to put differences aside in government for the good of our great democracy of the people.

Introduction



Before the United States Constitution, the Articles of Confederation was the main document that stated the rights and powers of the government, the states, and the people. However, the Articles gave the national government little power to solve growing hostility between the states. As a result, the Constitution was created to reform the Articles. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments in the Constitution.

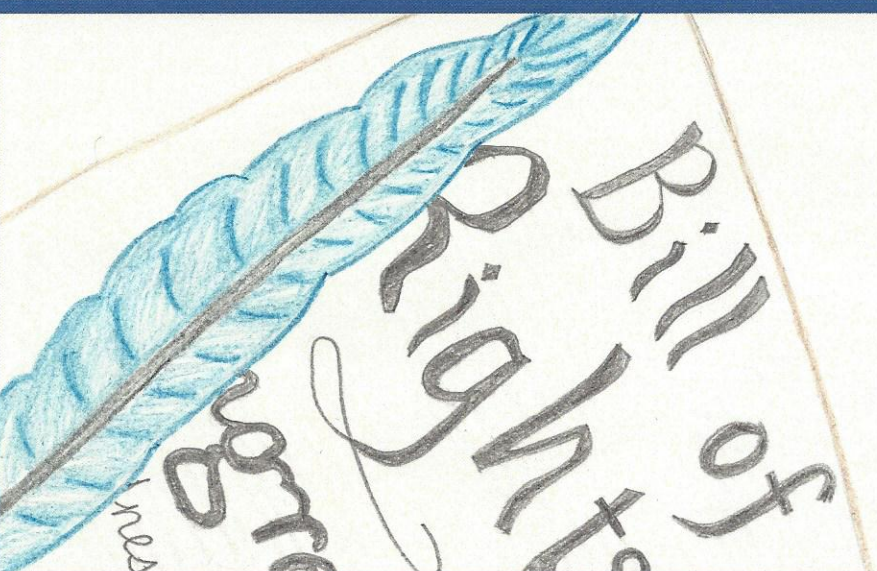
These articles would help pave the way for future amendments and assist in the formation of the basis of basic human rights.



I

The Bill of

Rights



James Madison



Widely renowned as the “Father of the Constitution” for his participation in outlining the United States Constitution, James Madison drafted and wrote the Bill of Rights. Also known as a Founding Father of our country, Madison served as the fourth President of the United States. He was one of the Bill of Rights’ main supporting advocates, cooperating with both Alexander Hamilton and John Jay to publish *The Federalist Papers*, which was one of the most popular articles written in support of the Constitution.

The Rights of the People

The Bill of Rights guarantees the freedoms and rights of the people, sets limits to the government’s power, and grants the states all powers not specifically given to Congress by the Constitution. Motivated by the Anti-Federalists’ fear of a strong national government, James Madison wrote what would eventually become a very important record of human rights and privileges.



“[A] bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse.”

- Thomas Jefferson, December 20, 1787

Based on documents like the English Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights ensures basic liberties of the people, such as the right to bear arms, the right to a trial by jury, and the right to due process of law. With these rights ensured, the Bill of Rights set a defined path towards a united country, specifying what the government could and could not do.

The Bill of Rights shows the value of natural rights and people’s willingness to fight to ensure them. This document impacted American history by ensuring protection for the people, allowing them to feel safe with guaranteed freedoms of speech, press, and religion. It gave Americans a unique view of liberty, as well as protect individuality within the authority of the government.



Quick

Look

The Bill of Rights was drafted by James Madison, and was ratified on December 15, 1791. It built on the already existing constitution, and held important American freedoms. These freedoms protect citizens every day.

James
Madison
1751-1836



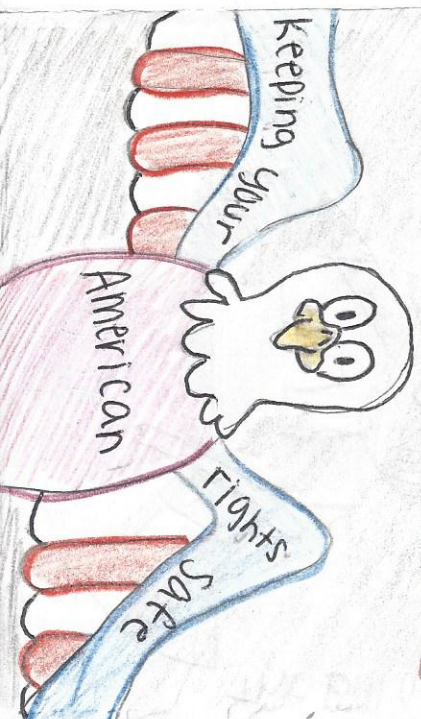
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THE

BILL

OF

RIGHTS



The Bill of Rights makes up the first 10 amendments in the Constitution



FIRST TEN



The Bill of Rights has shaped what it means to be an American citizen. It grants the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and protest. It also provides the right to bear arms, protects from unlawful searches, and keeps soldiers from staying in civilian homes. In addition, the bill states: a person may not be forced to be a witness, grants a fair trial, and stops cruel punishments. This document reflects the American attitude of achieving freedom by giving great rights to its citizens. The bill was inspired by the fact that the Constitution left out individual rights, and was also greatly inspired by Thomas



Jefferson. The idea of the Bill of Rights caused controversy in the government when it was proposed, as the Federalists believed it was unnecessary, while the Anti-Federalists claimed without it the government would be overpowering. Both groups sacrificed four long years to



Thomas
Jefferson

debate the topic. The Bill of Rights has, and will continue to give American citizens their unalienable