

Bill of Rights:

The Bill of Rights was created in the late 1700s at the nation's capital (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) by the First Congress, with James Madison in the lead. The Bill of Rights was adopted after the Massachusetts Compromise, which was between Federalists and Antifederalists. The Bill of Rights consisted of the first ten amendments in the Constitution. The first eight amendments gave citizens more guaranteed freedoms without declining the national government's authority. These rights had not been specifically granted by the Constitution, and before the Bill of Rights was written Antifederalists had worried about the rights of the people. The First Amendment, for instance, guaranteed five basic freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition. Other rights protected by the first eight amendments included the ability for states to create militias, protection from standing armies, and limitations of state police power. The final two amendments gave people or the states power that the federal government did not have. The Bill of Rights is important because it guaranteed Americans more individual freedoms, as the Antifederalists had hoped. The country could not fall into tyranny because of the rights that states and citizens now possessed. Because of its creation, the Bill of Rights led to the passage of the Constitution; while the Federalists believed that it was unnecessary, the Antifederalists wanted to guarantee individual liberties before agreeing to the Constitution.

Strict vs. Loose Interpretation of the Constitution:

The Constitution was ratified in the late 1700s and from the very beginning Americans had different interpretations of it. Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, believed in a looser interpretation of the Constitution. On the other hand, Antifederalists (Republicans) led by Thomas Jefferson had a stricter interpretation of the document. Antifederalists thought that in order for America to thrive there needed to be defined rights for the states and citizens. These liberties, they believed, could only be granted by a strict interpretation of the Constitution. On the other hand, Federalists believed that all rights that were undefined should automatically go to the federal government. They preferred a stronger federal government. Hamilton's national bank idea was the first clear-cut argument over strict and loose interpretations of the Constitution. Hamilton's bank was based on a loose interpretation of the Constitution since the Constitution did not have any clear rules regarding a national banking system. George Washington was unsure about the bank and asked for Jefferson's opinion. Jefferson, being Antifederalist, disliked the idea and told Washington this. Nevertheless, Washington still followed Hamilton's plan. This is important because it set a precedent for loose interpretations of the Constitution and that the federal government would have more power. Political parties also formed due to the differing interpretations.

The XYZ Affair:

The XYZ Affair took place in Paris, France in the late 1700s. The French were attacking American ships and taking men from them, so John Adams sent over a peace commission (Charles Pinckney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry) to Paris. The French foreign minister, Charles de Talleyrand, refused to meet the Americans and instead sent three agents who were only known as "X, Y, and Z" to talk to them. France demanded a large loan and bribe in order to start discussing their relations, which the Americans refused. Americans were upset by this, and this led to anti-French and anti-immigrant feelings in America. Americans wanted to be respected, but the French had not shown them much respect. The XYZ Affair is important because although it didn't do anything about the French impressment (in fact, the fighting went on in an event known as the Quasi War), it caused America to pass the Alien and Sedition Acts. These acts were geared towards Republicans and immigrants, as these Americans had supported the French. American feelings towards the French (at least in the cases of the Federalists) sank due to this event and the Quasi War.

Alien and Sedition Acts:

The Alien and Sedition Acts were laws passed in the late 1700s at the nation's capital. The laws were passed and approved by the Federalist-dominated Congress and John Adams. They were supposed to protect national security in America. The Alien Enemies Act prevented wartime spying, the Alien Friends Act allowed for foreigners to be expelled from the country (by the chief executive if they were considered dangerous), and the Naturalization Act changed the procedures that let immigrants become citizens. The Alien Acts targeted Irish and French immigrants the most and also impacted their abilities to vote. The Sedition Act forbade people from opposing the government. The Sedition Act affected both Americans and foreigners. It could be interpreted to mean that all criticism could be punished. The act violated freedom of speech, which was protected by the Bill of Rights. These acts, made to hurt immigrants, were ultimately supposed to harm Republicans. Federalists were losing support, so they were trying to make it harder for immigrants (supporters of Republicans) to vote. These acts are important because it showed that the downfall of Federalists was coming. They also lead to the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions.

Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions:

The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions were written by James Madison and Thomas Jefferson in the late 1700s. These resolutions were created because they believed that the Alien and Sedition Acts were unconstitutional. Jefferson and Madison, who were Republicans, believed that states should have more power and disliked how much power the federal government had. They decided to draw up their resolutions and present them to the Virginia and Kentucky legislatures. The men wanted the states to be able to "nullify" laws that they deemed unconstitutional, such as the Alien and Sedition Acts. The two states agreed and passed these resolutions, and this nearly led to a civil war. The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions are important because the resolutions could have potentially led to a civil war and to violence. States declared that they were equal and didn't have to listen to every law, and this issue would arise later on in history during the Civil War-era. Highlighting the differences between opinions and sectional conflict, they symbolized the issues between state and federal rights.

Monroe Doctrine:

The Monroe Doctrine was President James Monroe's message to Congress in Washington D.C. (but written mostly by John Quincy Adams) in the early 1800s. The Doctrine was written after Britain proposed that it and America made a statement that opposed interference (like that of the Holy Alliance) in South America and that neither would annex any part of Spain's old empire. Adams wanted the United States, however, to issue a separate statement from Britain. The message stated that America would stay out of European wars unless it involved their interests, "American continents" were not for the colonization of European powers, and any attempt at American colonization would be seen as an "unfriendly act." The Doctrine itself didn't have a huge effect (the British navy did). Monroe's Doctrine is important because America promised to stay out of European affairs, including revolutions and wars. It also claimed America's position in the New World and showed that the nation saw itself as strong and powerful.

Marbury v. Madison:

Marbury v. Madison was a court case that took place in the early 1800s between William Marbury and James Madison. On his last day in office, President John Adams appointed many judges ("the midnight judges") including the Federalist Marbury as Justice of the Peace in the District of Columbia. Marbury's commission had never been granted however, and the new Secretary of State (James Madison) refused to release the commission. Marbury wanted a writ of mandamus that would force them to make the delivery. Chief Justice John Marshall eventually decided that the Judiciary Act (which allowed for such a writ to be issued) was unconstitutional and Marbury thus did not get his writ. Furthermore, both Federalists and Antifederalists were happy with the result of the court case. Federalists were glad that Marbury did not get his writ, while Antifederalists were pleased with the implementation of judicial review since it made sure Congress did not have too much power. This court case is important because it was the first time that an act of Congress was seen as unconstitutional. This event set a precedent for similar events and gave the courts the power of judicial review.

John Marshall:

John Marshall was a Chief Justice in the Supreme Court in the early 1800s. Marshall, before being on the Supreme Court, had been merely the son of a farmer in Virginia. His service in the Continental Army made him feel like part of the Union as a whole instead of one particular state. Marshall was the Chief Justice during multiple cases that shaped American history. In *Marbury v. Madison* for instance, he found an act of Congress unconstitutional. He paved the way for judicial review and tended to have a relatively loose interpretation of the Constitution (since he was Federalist). He helped shape the Supreme Court as it is today through his rulings. He helped define the rights of the people, states, and federal government within the young nation. His most important cases include: *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, and *Gibbons v. Ogden*. John Marshall is important because he was the first member of the Supreme Court to declare a law unconstitutional (which led to judicial review). He set a precedent for events occurring later on in the century, including the power of the federal government and the influence of judicial review.

Impressment:

After the Treaty of Amiens collapsed in the early 1800s, France and England began fighting while America remained neutral. American ships were seized and British sailors who abandoned the Royal Navy were taken back. Sailors had been deserters because they were paid less and British ships were brutal. Impressed sailors were continually escaping and being recaptured. Many deserters had even become American citizens, but if they were born British they were still considered Britons. Sometimes American-born citizens were taken as well. The Chesapeake Affair, where the British ship called the Leopard seized the American ship called the Chesapeake right near the coast. The practice died down after the British defeated Napoleon in the Battle of Trafalgar and no longer needed the manpower of impressed sailors. Impressment is important because it created conflicts between America and Britain, ultimately leading to the War of 1812. This also somewhat led to the formation of the Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts and the Industrial Revolution.

Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts:

The Embargo Act was an early 1800s law created during Jefferson's presidency to stop the impressment and the unfair handling of U.S. ships by the warring England and France. Averting war with Europe, it hurt American trade as well. Because of its effect, it was a catalyst to domestic manufacturing and industrialization. The Non Intercourse Act came soon after during Madison's presidency and allowed America to trade with nations other than Britain or France. Part of this act included Macon's Bill No. 2, which would allow trade with both Britain and France if the two countries stopped seizing American ships. Napoleon said that he would stop when the British did, and the British claimed the opposite; in reality, impressment didn't end. These acts are important because they attempted to stop conflicts and impressment and eventually led to the War of 1812.