The Confederation Period as the Most Important Political Movement

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**Question:** What do you think has been the most important social or political movement of the time period under study? Why?

The development of the United States between 1500 and 1877 is arguably the most important time period in our history. Between this time, America was discovered, the colonists developed their own government and gained freedom, and entirely discovered what it take to be an American. The most important time under this time period is within the confederation period between 1781 and 1787. This time period is so important because it was when the Articles of Confederation and the Ordinance of 1785 and 1787 were put into effect. The establishment of the Articles of Confederation and the Ordinance of 1785 and 1787 are the most important social movements under this time period because without it America as we know it today wouldn’t exist.

The main reason the colonists came to America was to get away from the power of Britain, gain their own freedom, and establish their own government and the Articles of Confederation are technically the first constitution and a huge milestone socially and even politically. The states were a bit skeptical about a strong central government because that was what they were used to in Britain so they created the Articles to reflect that the majority of power was to go to individual states so that they could still have sovereignty and freedom and independence. Under the Articles the Congress consisted of representatives from each state. According to an article on the website “Early America” the Articles of Confederation, “denied Congress the power to collect taxes, regulate interstate commerce and enforce laws” (Milestone Events, Archiving Early America). Since the congress couldn’t make laws, taxes, or regulate interstate commerce the states themselves still had their independence and freedom. This is the most important social and political movement under this time period because it reflects what the colonists really wanted politically by establishing the first Congress under the new land and also showed what they socially wanted in their new lives.

With the newly found freedom from Britain, people were looking for new land to live in and gain a bit of their own power thus the Ordinance of 1785 was established, a major social event in history. When doing research on the timeline of the Confederation Period, I discovered that Thomas Jefferson created the Ordinance to prepare the new areas in the west for statehood. The main purpose of the Ordinance was to establish easier boundaries because the existing boundaries were similar to a jigsaw puzzle. Along with establishing boundaries the Ordinance established living conditions. According the U-S History website, “the Ordinance also provided that Section 16 in each township was to be reserved for the benefit of public education. All other sections were to be made available to the public at auction” (Ordinance of 1785, Acts, Bills, and Laws). This was important to America socially because it represents how civilians would go to school and create a living but also figure out how to make agreements between everyone. The Ordinance of 1785 is socially important to America because it is the establishment of how Americans live and was the beginning of housing development and school systems.

Along with wanting to move to the west to start a life there, a social importance, it wouldn’t be possible without the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Before the Ordinance of 1787 the land North of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River was forbidden to develop on and the Ordinance showed that it would be developed on and would eventually be an official part of the United States. The Ordinance was passed because of the increasing number of settlers and want to live in states that are known as Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin today. Thomas Jefferson also drew up the Northwest Ordinance and the lines that were opened up were from lines that he drew up in his Report of Government for Western Lands. According to the article “The Northwest Ordinance” on the Early America website, “The Ordinance provided for the creation of not less than three nor more than five states. In addition, it contained provisions for the advancement of education, the maintenance of civil liberties and the exclusion of slavery” (Milestone Events, Archiving Early America). The Ordinance of 1787 is incredibly important to America’s history socially because it developed education advancements, excluded slavery, brought on the existence of five major states, and brought on the expansion of America.

The establishment of the Articles of Confederation and the Ordinance of 1785 and 1787 are the most important social movements under this time period because without it America as we know it today wouldn’t exist. If the Articles of Confederation weren’t drawn up the constitution today could be different, if the Ordinance of 1785 wasn’t made living and school conditions could be different, and if the Ordinance of 1787 wasn’t established the state boundaries could be different and Lewis and Clark might not have even explored the west because it could have been forbidden; which is exactly why those three documents are socially the most important movements in America.

Capstone Essay Works Cited

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