**Northwest Ordinance**

This article about  the  Northwest Ordinance provides information about the events in America surrounding the War of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the change from Colonies to States

* Northwest Ordinance 1787
* What was the  Northwest Ordinance? Meaning and definition
* Fast facts and information about Northwest Ordinance and conditions by States
* Interesting information and facts about the origin of the territories and the Northwest Ordinance 1787

**Northwest Ordinance**  
The Meaning and Definition of the Northwest Ordinance: The Northwest Ordinance was formally called 'An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North-West of the River Ohio'. The Northwest Ordinance was an act of the Congress of the Confederation of the United States that was passed on July 13, 1787. This important legislation provided for the rapid and orderly expansion of the new nation across the continent.

**Northwest Ordinance - Background Info**  
Great Britain had never owned any land in the Mississippi valley until France ceded the country following their defeat in the French Indian War when the Peace Treaty of Paris 1763 was signed  and Great Britain received all French lands east of the Mississippi River. The American War of Independence began on April 18, 1775. Congress advised all the colonies to form governments and adopt constitutions for themselves. This turned the British colonies into independent states - refer to Colonies to States.

**Northwest Ordinance - Transfer of State Claims**During this period of dramatic changes in America and changing colonies into states there were a series of State Land Claims. These claims for state land ownership were resolved but legislation was required to provide for the rapid and orderly expansion of the new nation across the continent. This issue was addressed by Congress in the Northwest Ordinance. By 1784 the states claiming western territory had given their land to Congress. This vast possession of land stretched from the Lakes to the Ohio and from the Mississippi to Pennsylvania.

**Northwest Ordinance - Transfer of State Claims - 1784 Conditions**  
The lands passed over to Congress were given on certain conditions:

* Condition 1: That the land should be cut up into states
* Condition 2: That these states should be admitted into the Union (when they had a certain population) on the same footing as the 13 original states
* Condition 3: That the land should be sold and the money used to pay the debts of the United States

Note: The strip of land owned by Connecticut was offered to Congress in October 1789, but not accepted. The land still belonged to Connecticut in 1785 but in 1786 it was again ceded, with certain reservations and accepted by Congress

**Northwest Ordinance - Land Ordinance 1784**Thomas Jefferson, who wanted to abolish slavery, was the principal author of the Ordinance of 1784.  The Land Ordinance of 1784 called for the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains, north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River to be divided into ten separate states. The Ordinance of 1784 was enacted on April 23, 1784 and adopted by the United States Congress under the Articles of Confederation. The Land Ordinance of 1784  contained five important articles:

* The 10 new states shall remain forever a part of the United States of America
* The new states should shall bear the same relation to the confederation as the original states
* Each of the new states shall pay their share of the federal debts
* The new states shall, in their governments, uphold republican forms
* After the year 1800 there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the new states

The Land Ordinance of 1784 passed without the 5th clause concerning slavery and was in force for 3 years. The Ordinance of 1784 was further augmented with the Land Ordinance of 1785 and superseded by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

**Northwest Ordinance - Land Ordinance 1785**The Ordinance of 1784 aimed to divide the lands into ten separate states. However, the 1784 resolution did not define the mechanism by which the land would become states, or how the territories would be governed or settled before they became states. The Ordinance of 1785 provided a mechanism for selling and settling the lands because, under the Articles of Confederation, Congress did not have the power to raise revenue by direct taxation of the people of the United States. the Land Ordinance of 1785 was designed to prepare the land for sale by surveying it and marking it out into sections, townships, and ranges, and fixed the price per acre. Over 75% of the land ultimately came under the rectangular survey that provided easily recognized land descriptions and contributed enormously to the orderly occupation of the new lands of the United States.

**Northwest Ordinance 1787 - Origin of the Territories**The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 addressed the provision of government in the new territories. Congress realized that this was necessary when a number of Revolutionary soldiers formed the Ohio Land Company, and sent an agent to New York, where Congress was in session, and offered to buy 5,000,000 acres on the Ohio River: 1,500,000 acres were for the Ohio Land Company and 3,500,000 for the Scioto Company. Congress were pleased to sell so much land but as the purchasers were going to send out settlers, it became necessary to establish some kind of government for them. On the 13th of July, 1787 Congress therefore passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which ordered that:

* Northwest Ordinance 1787: The whole region from the Lakes to the Ohio, and from Pennsylvania to the Mississippi, should be called "The Territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio."
* Northwest Ordinance 1787: The territory should be cut up into not less than three nor more than five states, each of which might be admitted into the Union when it had 60,000 free inhabitants
* Northwest Ordinance 1787: Within the territory there was to be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except in punishment for crime
* Northwest Ordinance 1787: Until such time as there were 5000 free male inhabitants aged over 21 years old in the territory, it was to be governed by a governor and three judges. They could not make laws, but might adopt existing laws in the states.
  + Northwest Ordinance 1787:After there were 5000 free male inhabitants in the territory the people were to elect a house of representatives, which in its turn was to elect 10 men from whom Congress was to select 5 to form a council
  + Northwest Ordinance 1787:The house of representatives and the council were then to elect a territorial delegate to sit in Congress with the right of debating, not of voting
  + Northwest Ordinance 1787:The governor, the judges, and the secretary were to be elected by Congress
  + Northwest Ordinance 1787:The council and house of representatives could make laws, but must send them to Congress for approval

**Northwest Ordinance 1787 - Slave Soil**  
The Northwest Ordinance was only a few months old when South Carolina ceded her small strip of country west of the mountains with the express condition that it should be slave soil. Then in 1789 North Carolina ceded what is now Tennessee on the same condition. Congress accepted both and out of them made the "Territory southwest of the Ohio River." in which slavery was allowed.

Source:

http://www.landofthebrave.info/northwest-ordinance.htm