Standard 8.29 Lesson

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8.29 Analyze the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and their impact on the future development of western settlement and the spread of public education and slavery.

**LAND ORDINANCE OF 1785**

The Land Ordinance of 1785 was a system for dividing up western lands. Public land was divided into townships. Surveyors staked out six-mile square plots and would call them townships. These townships would be 36 square miles with 36 lots of 640 acres each. One section in each township would be set aside for a school, reflecting the belief that democracy depended on education. Four lots were reserved for Revolutionary War veterans and the others would be sold for no less than $1 per acre.
The Articles of Confederation and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML8qtTpVuDs

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787

This ordinance carved out these states as we know them today: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota and Wisconsin. This ordinance outlined how the territory was to be governed, guaranteed rights for settlers and banned slavery in these areas. Congress would allow this territory to be divided and a governor would be appointed over each. Each territory would gain rights to self-govern. The Northwest Ordinance also set the process for admitting new states.
3 point process for becoming a state:

1. Congress would appoint a governor, a secretary and three judges.
2. When there were 5000 free adult male settlers who owned at least 50 acres of land, they could elect an assembly.
3. When the free population reached 60,000 they could apply to become a state.

( Pictured Above: The town of Marietta, Ohio, was one of the first settlements in the Northwest Territory.)

While granted the western lands from the British, actual ownership of this land and how to best settle it was enormously controversial. Although states had ceded their own claim to western land to the national government as part of their ratification of the Articles of Confederation, this threatened to reemerge as a postwar problem. Many Americans had ignored legal restrictions on western settlement and simply struck out for new land that they claimed as their own by right of occupation. How could a national Congress with limited financial resources and no coercive power deal with this complex problem?

The Congressional solution was a remarkable act of statesmanship that tackled several problems and did so in a fair manner. The Congress succeeded in asserting its ownership of the western lands and used the profits from their sale to pay the enormous expenses associated with settlement (construction of roads, military protection, etc.). Second, the Congress established a process for future states in this new area to join the Confederation on terms fully equal to the original thirteen members. The new states would be SOVEREIGN and not suffer secondary colonial status.

The actual process by which Congress took control of the area of western lands north of the Ohio River indicated some of its most impressive actions. Three laws regarding the settlement of this NORTHWEST TERRITORY established an ADMISSION POLICY to the United States based on population, organized the settlement of the territory on an orderly rectangular grid pattern that helped make LEGAL TITLE more secure, and prohibited
the expansion of slavery to this large region which would eventually include the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The resolution of a potentially crisis-filled western land policy was perhaps the most outstanding accomplishment of the first national government. A political process for adding new states as equals was created. A partial solution to the national revenue crisis was found. Together these policies fashioned a mechanism for the United States to be a dynamic and expanding society. Most remarkably of all, Congressional western policy put into practice some of the highest Revolutionary ideals that often went unheeded. By forbidding slavery in the Northwest as an inappropriate institution for the future of the United States, the Congress’ achievements should be considered quite honorable. At the same time, however, there were people whose rights were infringed upon by this same western policy. The control of land settlement by the central government favored wealthy large-scale land developers over small-scale family farmers of ordinary means. Furthermore, Native Americans’ claim to a western region still largely unsettled by whites was largely ignored.