

Northwest ordinance essay

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Due to the growing number of settlers and the Ohio Land Company, the Congress was prompted to pass The Northwest Ordinance of 1787. This Ordinance, deemed as the most significant accomplishment of the Congress of the Confederation, has declared that the lands east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio River are now allowed for settlement and that these lands would become part of the United States. Previously, development of these lands had been restricted.

The borders for the expansion were determined by the lines laid out by Thomas Jefferson in 1784 in his Report of Government for Western Lands. As a result, the Ordinance created five new states, namely, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. To rule over the newly established territories temporarily, the Congress appointed judges and governors until the number of free male inhabitants of voting reaches 5, 000.

These inhabitants would then elect a territorial legislature that would become a non-voting representative to Congress. However, when inhabitants of a territory reach 60, 000, the legislature is now allowed to submit a state constitution to Congress. Once approved, the land would now become part of the Union. Provisions of the Ordinance include the exclusion of slavery, maintenance of civil liberties, and the advancement of education. Importantly, it emphasized the equality among the old and new states. All settlers would be equal citizens; thus, these people would have the same rights that had been fought in the Revolution, such as religious freedom, trial by jury, and habeas corpus. For the United States, the most significant contribution of The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 is that it opened the door for further westward expansion.

From then on, this Ordinance became the guiding policy for admission of future states into the Union.