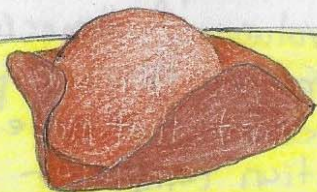




The Bill of Rights was a document that ensured certain liberties and rights could not get taken away.

Above: A bald eagle, with broken chains around its feet.



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Bill of Rights

Congress of THE United States

at the City of New York
one thousand seven hu



History of the Bill of Rights

When the Constitution was first introduced in 1787, it was not quite complete. The writers of the Constitution had been focused on creating an efficient federal government that could have more power to manage and settle issues. However, this effectively made individual rights and freedom very low on its priorities.

At the time, the Constitution actually barely contained any rights at all. It did have a few of them, such as Art. 1, Sections 9 and 10 (legislative determinations of punishment). The writers of the Constitution assumed that the Constitution accounted for limiting its power through its checks and balances feature, which pitted forces of government separately and sometimes against each other to ensure no one would have too much power.

Still, many of those who opposed the Constitution feared the government would take their rights away. (They were called Anti-Federalists.) After much debate, the Bill of Rights, the parchment guaranteeing many liberties and rights for the people, was added to the Constitution.

Arguments about the Bill of Rights

"A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on Earth, general or particular, and what no government should refuse."

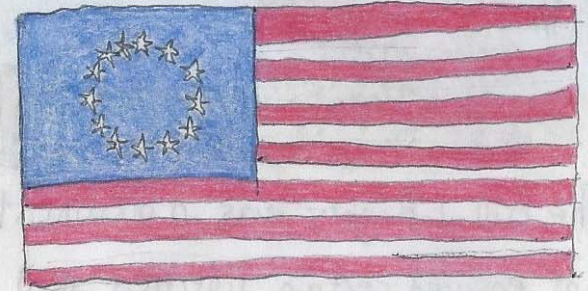
— Thomas Jefferson

The Constitution was a wonderful, incredible system of (self)government, but it was not without its flaws. As much thought went into organizing a government with the power to actually govern the nation without constant approval of every single state, it lacked a document, or a bill of individual rights. It talked of what and how the government could do things, but did not talk of what it was forbidden to do.

This created a dispute between two groups, the Federalists, who thought the Constitution was fine, and the Anti-Federalists, who thought the Constitution impaired and did not set forth liberties and rights.

Bill of Rights - Conclusion

The absence of a bill of rights caused many states and Anti-Federalists to oppose the Constitution. The Federalists would argue that it was unnecessary, and the Anti-Federalists, who having won a war with an over powerful, tyrannical government, opposed the Constitution without one. After 4 years of debate, the Bill of Rights was finally added to the Constitution, and in 1791, the Constitution's 10 amendments became the law.



The Bill of Rights turned out to be valuable, allowing amendments to be made to the Constitution and protecting individual rights. Americans back then have always distrusted big governments and preferred having the power to the people, and still do today. American values of democracy, liberty, and freedom was therefore preserved in this document that made the Constitution complete—

THE BILL OF RIGHTS