

Opening the Northwest Territory to Settlement

Teacher's Guide

The Revolutionary War was over. The new United States now reached across the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi River. Part of the new lands were the Northwest Territory where we live today.

The young country was experiencing financial problems. Too much continental currency had been printed during the war, which made it close to worthless. This caused much distress for veterans who had been paid with these continental dollars.

The United States was anxious to settle these new lands. The Congress decided to give land to the veterans of the Revolutionary War as payment for their service. The Ordinance of 1785 as written by Congress, determined how the land would be surveyed and divided, but it did not lay out a plan to govern the new territory. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was written to do just that, thus opening the door to settlement. **The specifics of the NW Ordinance will come up again when the fight for statehood is discussed.**

The DVD “Opening the Door West” is an excellent resource for this unit.

This feature length historical documentary is the story of the Ohio Company of Associates, a group of Revolutionary War officers and soldiers, and how, in 1788, they first opened the door for westward expansion of the new United States. At Marietta, Ohio, they began the first legal, organized American settlement in the old Northwest Territory. Divided into 12 chapters which can be watched individually. **Teacher guide is available.**

Please contact Julie Lambert to borrow a copy or order one at [http:// www.openingthedorwest.com](http://www.openingthedorwest.com)

PDFs:

1. **Americans Look Westward - 4** As interest grows in settlement of the Northwest Territory, Congress grants land to Revolutionary War veterans as payment for their service.

DVD: Opening the Door West - Chapter 2 “The Ohio Lands” (7 mins.)

The Northwest Territory was wild and pristine, filled with gigantic trees, exotic animals and birds and home to thousands of Native American Indians.

2. **Hard Times and Worthless Money** - Veterans had been paid in continental currency which was now worthless. This caused much distress as taxes rose to support the new country.

3. **Northwest Ordinance: A Plan for Government** -Congress created the Ordinance of 1785, then the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 to pave the way to settlement of the Northwest Territory.

**A good graphic showing how the townships were divided in the 1785 Ordinance can be found at : <http://admin.bhbl.neric.org/~mmosall/ushistory/topics/>

DVD: Opening the Door West - Chapter 3 “The Ordinance and The Company” (7mins)

Retired Revolutionary War Officers formed The Ohio Company to buy western lands and begin the country's western expansion. The Ordinance of 1787 was shepherded through Congress by company men to provide a legal framework for government. Article six-outlawed slavery in the NW – the first such move in America.