Post-Revolution Land Ordinances

**Land Ordinance of 1784-1785**

The Ordinance of 1784 divided western territory into 10 self-governing districts

* Could petition Congress for statehood when its population equaled the number of free residents in the smallest existing state
* This would prevent the creation of “second-class citizens” in smaller territories

The Ordinance of 1785 created a system of surveying and selling western lands

* Territory north of the Ohio River would be sold off in 36 equal townships
* Reserved one section in each township for the creation of a public school

Importance:

* Created a lasting pattern of dividing up land for human use
* Reflects the Enlightenment thinkers that mathematical forms of land distribution based on surveys was the most efficient way to divide up land
* These ordinances were supported by those who could afford the land, but opposed by those who couldn’t because they felt it was biased toward the wealthy
* Criticism led to the creation of the Northwest Territories

**Northwest Territories**

Single territory out of the lands north of the Ohio Valley. Guaranteed:

* Freedom of religion, right to a trial by jury, prohibition of slavery

This seemed to work out the conflict of white settlement in the West, but in reality much of this land belonged to Native Americans of the region. This brought on threats by the Iroquois, refusal by many tribes to negotiate treaties with the US and increased violence toward white settlers. This foreshadowed the problems of western settlement that would occur in the future.