

## Part One, American Government and U.S. Constitution

### Lesson 20: *Written-Constitutions & Defining Govt. Powers*

(Principles 20-21)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Part II: The Founders' Basic Principles – 28 Great Ideas that Changed the World

**Lesson 20** Time: 39:13 [for Sunday, July 20, 2014]

The 5000 Year Leap: 20<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> Principles, Reading Assignment: (pages 229-240);

**Majority Rule, Minority Rights;** (pages 229-232)

**Strong Local Self-government** (235-240)

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**Lesson objectives:** As a result of this lesson, the student should be able to discuss the following questions/topics:

1. WHAT WAS THE SERIOUS DEFECT IN THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION THAT MADE IT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF THEIR GOVERNMENT? (PAGE 229)

Articles of Confederation

- o Required unanimous vote for any change
- o Single state could prevent change
- o Disastrous in a state of emergency

2. AFTER READING JOHN LOCKE'S EXPLANATION OF MAJORITY RULE, HOW BINDING DO YOU THINK A MAJORITY'S DECISION SHOULD BE IN YOUR COMMUNITY? IS THERE ANY ROOM FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE? (229-30)

Unanimous Consent

- o Locke said impossible in society (because almost never is there unanimity, quote p229)

3. ACCORDING TO LOCKE, WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE TO MAJORITY RULE? HOW PRACTICAL IS IT TO ACHIEVE THAT? (230)

- o If 51% is good, why not 67% or 75%? [then minority given power over majority!]
- o "Minority Rule" – is when a minority can control the outcome of an issue affecting majority.

4. WHY IS IT A PROBLEM TO REQUIRE EVEN A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IN CONGRESS FOR THE PASSAGE OF ORDINARY LEGISLATION? (230-31)

- o Small group would hold whole hostage
- o Give a minority a negative upon the majority
- o Minority can control
- o But became necessary for the biggest vote issues (override of veto, removal of senator, impeachment proceedings, etc.

Prin 21

5. ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY RULES IN OUR SOCIETY, WHAT PROTECTION IS EXTENDED TO A PEOPLE? (231-32)  
[e.g. 1; Jury trial, small people in a minority got protection to start]

6. EXPLAIN THE HARM THAT COMES TO A PEOPLE WHEN POLITICAL POWER BECOMES TOO CENTRALIZED. (235)

### Centralized Power

- o Power gravitates toward center
- o Removes decision-making from people
- o Benumbs the spirit of voluntarism
- o [local people] lose the will to solve problems
- o seek anonymity of oblivion

7. WHAT'S THE GOLDEN KEY TO PRESERVING FREEDOM? (235-36)

### Key to Preserving Freedom

- o Divide into small, manageable units
- o Every person has voice and vote
- o wards – wisest invention ever devised [ward=watched over place, p236, Jefferson]

8. HOW DID NEW ENGLAND REVIVE THE ANGLO-SAXON INSTITUTES OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT? (236-37)

- o today in New England = wards (100 families)
- o elsewhere = precincts (100-1000 families)

9. HOW DID THOMAS JEFFERSON DESCRIBE THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS AMONG DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT? (239)

### From Nation to Farm

- o the way to good and safe government [is divide responsibility among the many] (quote, p238)

10. HOW DID JAMES MADISON DESCRIBE THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS? (239)

### o Madison quote:

- Nation: Defense, foreign commerce
- State: civil rights, roads, courts
- County: schools, roads
- City: utilities, welfare
- Family: farm

11. DESCRIBE THE SIZE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS ENVISIONED BY JEFFERSON. (239-40)

### Size of Federal Government

- o Relatively small (quote)

12. WHAT WAS THE WARNING OF HISTORIAN JOHN FISKE CONCERNING THE GROWTH OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT? (240)

- o [Don't let the government completely control the citizen, or local municipality]