Volume I: Issue 1

The BEACON *Lite*

A Condensed Curriculum of Constitutional Study

Clause Discussed:

- Preamble

Concepts Discussed:

- We the People of the United States
- Establish this Constitution

The **Preamble** to the **Constitution for the United States of America** begins without title:

> "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The Preamble answers the general questions *who* (We the People of the United States) does *what* (ordain and establish this Constitution) for *whom* (ourselves and our Posterity) and for *what* reasons (to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty).

Because the Preamble discusses the People ***of*** *the United States*, one must understand the meaning of *the United States* before covering their *People*.

In literal form, one should realize that *United States* ends with an "*s*", signifying multiple entities. It is a *plural* term representing many States united together, as in *these* united States. The Constitution confirms this literal connotation, showing a plural form in its clauses which signify form.

Article III, Section 3, Clause 1 provides perhaps the simplest, most direct example of the United States as a collection of States:

> "Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against *them*, or in adhering to *their* Enemies."

The **11th Article in Amendment** best references *the United States* as a collection of individual States, stating:

> "The judicial Power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in Law or Equity, commenced or prosecuted against *one of the United States* by Citizens of another State."

The manner of reference in the 11th Amendment to "*one* of the United States" throws off many Americans who are used to the concept of "many States — one United States". That there are *many* United States (and not just one) doesn't bode well with most American's understanding.

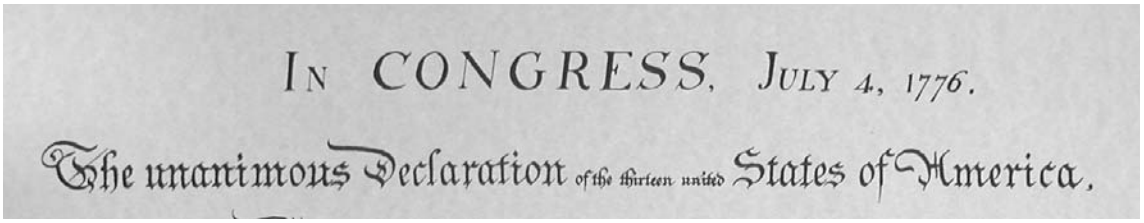
The concept of *many* United States fits well though with the actual title of the Declaration of Independence (shown at the bottom of this page) — "The unanimous Declaration of the *thirteen united States* of America".

In the Declaration of Independence, the colonies solemnly published and declared themselves to be "*Free and Independent States*".

In the September 3, 1783 **Paris Peace Treaty**, the separate States were individually named to more accurately define the term *the United States*. The King of Great Britain specifically acknowledged "*them*" as "*free, sovereign and independent States*", just as the States declared themselves seven years prior.

The United States, as the term is used in the Constitution, denotes the separate States united together (although it can reference one of the individual States that are united together).

There is no *United States* without consideration of the separate States. This concept is similar to a *family*; there being no single, distinct family entity; actually only a collection of individual persons.


IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

The United States is a group term signifying the States united together for common benefit.

To correctly understand the term, realize that word *united* is, in the most proper sense, an adjective modifying the noun *States*, as in the *united States*; rather than as proper noun, the *United States*.

There is not any singular federal entity passing legislation (which is not but a direct voice of the various States). There is no federal legislative entity apart from the assembling of States in Congress.

The literal meaning of *Congress* is nothing more than the separate States congregating together through their envoy of Senators and Representatives to pass laws of common benefit according to the powers ceded by each State individually.

Congress may be substituted in meaning by either "an assembling of States" or a "meeting of States" without any loss of meaning.

It is vital to have a firm foundation upon which to build a proper understanding of the relationship between the States in their separate capacities with that of their united capacity.

The phrase *We the People of the United States* has the equivalent meaning of:

> We the People of *the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia*.

This phrase does not discuss people of a single nation without internal borders, but a collection of States which have formed a common Union. The principle that the people are primarily Citizens of the States, and through the association of States a people united together, will become evident throughout the study of the Constitution.

Due to the specific wording used in the Preamble — W*e the People…do ordain and establish this Constitution* — it would seem logical to expect that the people in each State would have voted directly *for* or *against* the ratification of the Constitution.

Article VII provides that the Constitution would be established by actions of the *State conventions* rather than a direct vote of the people in each State, however.

The **First Clause** declares:

> "The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same."

It is difficult to guess the exact reasons why the delegates choose to use the term *People* in the Preamble when it is evident that these *People* had no direct action in establishing the Constitution. That the delegates wished to convey that their ultimate authority to ratify the Constitution rested with the People is presumed.

The Constitution, in other words, had nothing directly to do with the *People* of the United States; action only occurred through the people's delegated authority to the State. On this delegated authority rests the concept of *representative* government; a Republic of delegated governing authority.

The general wording of the Preamble must be overruled by the actual ratification process. The convention was convened by *States*; the votes during the convention were taken by *States*; and the Constitution was ratified by *States* in their separate conventions.

The **Preamble**, for a fully consistent and accurate meaning, *should* have actually been worded:

> "We the *States* of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia…do ordain and establish the Constitution for the(se) United States of America."

The concept of the States uniting together and establishing a Constitution granting the collective government of these united States limited powers does not limit the influence of people acting on the government, *it limits the influence of the government acting on the people.*

On September 15th, 1787, the Constitutional Convention delegates voted on whether or not to approve the finalized form of the Constitution and to have it sent to the States for ratification. This vote was taken, as were all other votes during the convention, by *States*, with each State having one vote.

The concept of a principal delegating authority to an agent will be a fundamental theme throughout *The Beacon of Liberty* and *The Beacon Lite.*

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