



"WE THE PEOPLE"

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When delegates of the newly independent American Colonies met in Philadelphia in 1787 to write a constitution, they took inspiration from many sources, including the Native Americans.

Benjamin Franklin observed that the Cherokees and Iroquois had a fine working example of representative democracy, with an unwritten constitution that spelled out checks and balances, rules of procedure, limits of power and a stress on individual liberty. Much of the Constitution came to reflect the Native Americans ideas, but did not include them until the 20th Century, resulting in the loss of lives and the removal of many tribes from their homeland.

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