

wrote:" They certainly defended it with a Spirit, they have shown no where else to an equal Degree during the War. I went on shore to survey this celebrated Place. Nothing surely was ever so torn & riven by Cannon-Balls. A more dismal Picture of Ruin can scarce be conceived. But if we had not taken it it is said, we could not have been supported in Philadelphia."

Philadelphia! Even Lord Richard Howe's secretary betrayed suspicion that the rebel's capital had not really been worth the price that had been paid to secure possession of that city. But with Fort Mifflin at last reduced, regardless of the cost, the Howe brothers intensified their search for a safe channel through the chevaux-de-frise. They succeeded on November 21, and on the 23rd the British transports at last made their way to Philadelphia thereby securing a water route for supplies with which to maintain their soldiers through the winter.

THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

The same day that Fort Mifflin was reduced by the British, Congress, sitting in York, Pennsylvania, adopted the most important document in its history--an agreement that would formally bind the thirteen states into a confederation. Two days before the vote on the Articles of Confederation was taken, Cornelius Harnett, a delegate from North Carolina, wrote to Thomas Burke, governor of that state:

The child Congress has been big with, these two years past, is at last brought forth--(Confederation). I fear it will by several Legislatures be thought a little deformed--you will think it a Monster. The mode of settling the Quota of each State towards defraying the general expense, has taken up much time. Some States were for the valuation of all the property in each State. Others, for fixing it by the number of Inhabitants. Others on the valuation of land. This last seemed to come as near the mark as any, except a valuation of all property. However the Value of lands has taken place much against the desire of the Delegates from the [North] Eastern States.

Congress had indeed worked more or less diligently for nearly two years on terms for confederating. The final document contained only thirteen articles, and most were agreed upon with minimal dispute. Once accepted by the legislatures of all thirteen states, the new government, to be entitled "The United States in Congress Assembled," would replace the Second Continental Congress that had acted as the central representative body of the states since 1775. The Articles of Confederation did not establish a strong central government, however. Rather it proposed that the states "enter into a firm league of friendship with each other for their common defence, the security of their liberties and their mutual and