

# THE NORTHWEST ORDINANCE

## CONGRESS OF THE CONFEDERATION

*Passed when only a single state outlawed slavery, the anti-slavery stance of the Northwest Ordinance—barring slavery in the territories, and thus in future states—gave weight to Abraham Lincoln’s later argument that the Founders sought to place slavery “in the course of ultimate extinction.”*

JULY 13, 1787

### ARTICLE VI

... There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: *Provided always*, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed, and conveyed to the person 5 claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid....