The Bill of Rights and 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments

Bill of Rights – Reasoning behind it

* Anti-Federalists demanded it for ratification of the Constitution
* Preserve rights of individuals against government tyranny
* James Madison – author – Father of Constitution

Origin – where did the idea come from?

* English Bill of Rights
  + English citizens were used to having rights guaranteed to them that government could or should not abuse. These ideas of rights of citizens were brought to the New World and transformed into the BOR we see today.

The Amendments – BOR

* 1st – right to free speech, assembly (meet), petition government, religion, and press (journalism)
* 2nd – keep a well-regulated militia, right to bear arms (guns)
* 3rd – No quartering of troops in peace time
* 4th – No searches and seizure of property without a warrant based on probable cause (to include spying on someone)
* 5th – right to remain silent (self-incrimination), no double jeopardy, can’t be held for a crime unless officially accused
* 6th – speedy and public trial in criminal cases by a jury, right to confront witnesses against you
* 7th – trial by jury in civil cases (law suits)
* 8th – no cruel or unusual punishment (like torture) or excessive fines (like bail or bond)
* 9th – Future Rights (more rights as citizens than what are actually listed in the BOR)
* 10th – powers not specifically listed for federal government are given to states (sharing powers – Federalism)

Reconstruction Amendments

* 13th – Slavery is prohibited after the Civil War in all U.S. territory
* 14th – gives former slaves citizenship
* 15th – guarantees the Right to Vote for former slave men only

Summary on next page

Summary

The Bill of Rights was written in order to compromise with Anti-Federalists to get the Constitution ratified. James Madison authored the Bill of Rights. Madison was a federalists but believed it to be a positive thing. The BOR spells out the specific rights of the people that government cannot take away whenever they feel the need. The Reconstruction Amendments or the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were designed after the Civil War in a time known as Reconstruction. They had a huge impact on the country and still do today.

Summary