



Prior to the Revolutionary War most maps of the American continent were published in England. Following the conclusion of hostilities, recognition of the United States as an independent nation stimulated demands for new and updated maps. In 1784, Adolf Riedel, a German geographer and cartographer, and another local cartographer, respectively published the first maps of the new United States produced by an American. "A New and Correct Map of the United States of North America" laid down the basic observations and best authorities available to the maker of 1785. Like most of the better contemporary cartographers, Riedel borrowed heavily from existing maps to complete his large 14 1/2 x 40 1/2 inch wall map, which shows the United States immediately prior to the writing and ratification of the Constitution. The original image was engraved on copper plates and was printed in four sections, with coloring on the map now applied by hand using water colors.

The copy of the second edition of the Riedel map, which is reproduced on left is from the collection of the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark. It was photographed by the National Geographic Society and a wood block covering of the reproduction. Only a handful of copies of Riedel's map survive - perhaps because it tended to be used as a wall map engraved in tin and light, and because it would have been replaced when it became outdated.

Longitude values along the north edge of the map are based on the Greenwich, England, Prime Meridian, those on the south edge are based on the meridian of Philadelphia. The practice of using one's own nation's capital as principal city as a reference point for longitude was common until the adoption of Greenwich as an international standard in 1884.

The creases shown by the original states on western lands were fully delineated by Riedel. Many of the claims conflict, as is evident from his depiction of the boundaries of Connecticut's claims, extending to the east to the Massachusetts River and to the west to the Mississippi River. This area also was claimed in whole or in part by Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia. Riedel's inscription is: "The Faculty of the University and Company of the STATE OF CONNECTICUT, do hereby certify the alignment of Connecticut over the validity of the claims and the agreement that the western lands should become territory of the Federal government led to the passage of a Congressional resolution in 1779, resulting in the transfer of these areas to the United States government between 1781 and 1802."

The intricate title cartouche at the lower right is a celebration of the new Nation and is rich in symbolism, including the newly adopted flag and stripes, and the figure of Liberty with the words "CONSTITUTION" and "LIBERTY" throughout the western lands. Riedel included notes on geographical features and below notes, including a description of the valley of the Susquehanna River: "Susquehanna Natural Meadows on the River, near 40th Miles in length, and from 10 to 20 miles wide where trees bear Bark of BALSAMIC and other Woods useful for Fire and Fuel." In order today to walk on Missouri, Riedel reports, "Observations taken in a canoe on the South Sea."

Riedel's map and other contemporary cartographic images of the United States and the North American continent helped shape the "mental maps" of the citizens of the Constitution as they converged on Philadelphia for the convention of 1787. In fact, these efforts created a framework for the Nation's geographic growth and development, as evidenced on the reverse of this sheet.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING
 Bacon, Walter W., *American Maps and Mapmakers: Geographical Cartography in the Nineteenth Century*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.
 Schuyler, Herman J., and Blumhagen, Ralph S., *The Mapping of America* (New York: Berg & Garson, Inc., 1980).
 Thompson, Maria M., *U.S. Geological Survey, Maps for America*, 2nd Edition, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985).
 Van Zandt, Franklin R., *U.S. Geological Survey, Boundaries of the United States and the Several States*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

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Maps of
An Emerging Nation
 The United States of America
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