

## **TOPIC I:**

### **Articles of Confederation, Constitutional Convention/Compromises, Ratification Process**

#### **A. Articles of Confederation:**

##### **Why a confederation?**

- There was a fear of too much power in the central government (monarchy). A confederation allowed the 13 states to keep power in their hands and limit the powers of the central government.

##### **What are the Articles of Confederation?**

- The 1st national constitution in US history

##### **When was it used?**

- The Articles were approved in 1781 and lasted until 1788 when it was replaced.

##### **How was it set up?**

- One branch government headed by a unicameral Congress
- Each state would have one equal vote in Congress
- No President to limit power
- No national system of courts to limit power
- 9 out of 13 states required to pass a law
- All 13 states are required to amend/change this constitution.

##### **Main Accomplishments:**

- It successfully addressed the western land issues with 2 laws:

1. **Land Ordinance 1785** - organized new land for sale

2. **Northwest Ordinance 1787** - established how territories would be governed and then how to become new states

##### **Why did the Articles fail?**

- The central government lacked the power to govern the country, while the states used their powers to compete against each other.

##### **What caused the need for a "constitutional convention"?**

- Shays's Rebellion made many people realize the central government needed more power to govern the country

## B. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:

### Who Attended?

- 55 elite/upper class delegates - THE COMMON FARMERS WERE NOT INVITED

**Why was a convention needed?** To revise or fix the weak Articles of Confederation

### Where & When was the convention held?

Delegates met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia between May and September 1787 (4 hot summer months)

### Who led this convention?

George Washington was elected as the "president" of the convention

James Madison's notes gave him the nickname "Father of the Constitution"

### Why did the convention last 4 months?

There were many disagreements/differences between:

Large states vs. Small states (representation in Congress)

Slave states vs. Free states (moral question)

agricultural states vs. Commercial states (control of trade)

**What was THE GREAT COMPROMISE?** It settled the disagreement over representation in the new Congress. The combination of ideas from the The New Jersey Plan and Virginia Plan resulted in the Connecticut Plan.

PLAN	SUPPORT	RESULT
NEW JERSEY PLAN	Smaller population states	Equal representation in the US Senate
VIRGINIA PLAN	Larger population states	Proportional representation in the House of Representatives

**CONNECTICUT PLAN** - The Great Compromise - brought a bicameral Congress to benefit the large and small states

### How did the Great Compromise cause the 3/5 Compromise?

Since the population now determined the number of seats in the House of Representatives, the South demanded that slaves be counted as part of their population. The North demanded that slaves be taxed as property. The solution was to not count all of the slaves but to count 3 out of every 5 slaves for purposes of representation in the House of Representatives.

## **What was the result of the Constitutional Convention?**

Although the goal of the convention was to fix the Articles of Confederation, the result was the removal of the Articles and a new constitution was adopted by the delegates.

## **How was the New Constitution ratified or approved?**

Since many delegates still feared too much power for the central government, ratification lasted for 8 months. Each state held their own convention to debate and vote on the new government.

When the 9th state, New Hampshire ratified, the country had a new government. All states eventually approved it.

## **Two very important reasons for ratification were:**

- 1). The promise to include a BILL OF RIGHTS
- 2). The influential pamphlet, "The Federalist Papers" which urged the need for this new government