

The Confederation Era

- A. Problems facing the new nations
 - 1. Couldn't affect the people's lives directly
 - 1) Couldn't tax
 - 2) Couldn't raise army by drafting
- B. Weak central government
 - 1. Federal government had to do everything through the states
 - 2. The movement for a stronger central government started in 1776
 - 1) People believed that the government under the Articles were too weak
 - a) But held off on it for a while
 - b) It was better to get something than nothing
 - 3. 1780's were a time of depression
 - 1) People blamed the government and wanted a stronger one
- C. Shared beliefs
 - 1. Representative government
 - 1) Big change in Revolution
 - a) Americans are politicized
 - b) People are sovereign now
 - i) No longer a king
 - 2) 2 reasons
 - a) Not much increase in suffrage
 - i) There was still property qualification
 - ii) People now believe that their vote means something
 - British government decided everything prior
 - b) Intellectual revolution and belief in representative government
 - i) People forced to take a stand on your belief
 - Gives you a greater stake in the outcome of the revolution
 - ii) People became anti-authoritarian
 - Started in the Great Awakening when you didn't just accept the words of the minister
 - 3) Argument of how to run a representative government
 - a) But no movement on having a monarchy, oligarchy or democracy
 - b) Property is a basic right for people
 - i) Ownership of property is directly linked to freedom
 - 2. Capitalism
 - 1) Everyone believed in capitalism
 - 3. Christianity
- D. Divisions within America
 - 1. Rational vs Emotional religion
 - 1) Rational
 - a) Oppose Great Awakening
 - i) Religion should be based on knowledge and studies
 - ii) Led by the educated
 - Believed the same for the government

- iii) Said that there should be qualifications for offices
 - Respect learning
 - iv) Elite-minded
 - Believe that they should run America
 - 2) Emotional (Evangelical)
 - a) Supported Great Awakening
 - b) Believe that any man should be able to do things
 - 2. Market economy vs subsistence farmers
 - 1) Market economy
 - 2) Subsistence farmers
 - a) Produces everything he needs
 - b) Trades to get other things he needs
 - i) Rarely buy things
 - 3. Democratic vs elite-minded
- E. Successes
 - 1. Peace treaty
 - 2. NW territories
- F. Moves for change
 - 1. Mount Vernon & Annapolis Conventions
 - 2. Precipitating events (Calling for the Philadelphia Convention)
 - 1) Failure of Impost of 1785
 - a) Bill that would have given CC power to have tariffs
 - b) They had no power to tax before, but the Impost would have given them that power
 - i) Failed the first time
 - NY voted against it because they have a lot of trade ports and are paying import duties
 - State usually got money from import duties or land tax
 - c) Re-proposed in 1785 but RI votes against it
 - i) Have many ports (New Port and Providence)
 - Do a lot of trade
 - d) Convinced people that the government under the Articles is beyond saving and is too weak
 - 2) Rhode Island Paper money crisis
 - a) Create a lot of paper money
 - i) States have a debt, but if you print a lot of money, then income goes up
 - ii) You have devalued state debt
 - But it also devalued every other debt
 - You would have creditors leaving the state
 - 3) Shay's rebellion
 - a) Farmers rebelling
 - i) Social inequity in imposing taxes
 - States differed in the amount of time they wanted to pay the debt off (Massachusetts wanted to pay it off quickly so they raised property and poll taxes)

- Taxes fell disproportionately on farmers in the west so they rebelled
- ii) Financial problems after the war
- iii) Shortage of gold and silver
- iv) Important affect
 - Upsets Washington
 - Even a government derived from people can provoke rebellion if it pursues conservative laws
 - Massachusetts government has the ability to suppress a rebellion without national assistance
 - Structure of Massachusetts government was structurally sound and gave influence to the Constitution because the government was able to deal with the rebellion
- 4) Philadelphia convention
 - a) Assert that you only need 9/13 states to ratify laws
 - b) Context of Constitution

G. The Constitution

1. Shared vision
 - 1) Republican form of government
 - 2) Competitive capitalist economy
 - 3) Power to tax
 - 4) Power to raise an army, directly
 - a) Power to draft people
2. Conflicts
 - 1) Slavery
 - 2) Foreign/economic affairs (trade; Mississippi River Navigation)
 - 3) Large vs Small State