



**THE ARTICLES OF  
CONFEDERATION**

# ARTICLES

- Written by the Second Continental Congress during a time of war, the Articles of Confederation served as our nation's first constitution
- It was very weak
- What is a confederation?
  - A league of friendship
- Why did the (former) colonists desire this type of government
  - America was afraid of a strong central Gov't (because of England)

# ARTICLES CONT.

## Powers of the government

- Northwest Ordinance of 1787
- Land Ordinance of 1785
- Declare War
- Diplomatic interactions with other countries
- Created a post office

## Weaknesses

- Couldn't tax
- No executive branch (no leader)
- Can't enforce laws
- No military
- No national court system
- Debt that states won't pay

# NORTHWEST ORDINANCE OF 1787

- Outlined how territories became states
- Present-day states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois were carved out of the territory
- Guaranteed settlers civil rights and banned slavery in the territory



NORTHWEST TERRITORY

# SHAYS' REBELLION

- Depression hit farmers and the legislature passed a heavy tax on the land which would be seized if they didn't pay
- Farmers rebelled, led by Daniel Shays
- The farmers tried to seize the Federal Arsenal
- Led to calls for a Constitutional Convention

# DO THE ARTICLES WORK?

- Nope! Articles = Weak
  - No President
  - Couldn't Tax
- Shay's Rebellion
  - A group of farmers tried to seize the federal arsenal
  - Showed the weaknesses of the Articles
    - The gov't couldn't force a state to help stop the rebellion
  - Convinced Americans to want to make the Articles Stronger

# THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

- Met in Philadelphia beginning on May 25, 1787.
- There were 55 delegates – lawyers, merchants, college presidents, physicians, generals, governors, and planters.
- Oldest delegate: Benjamin Franklin, at 81.
- Two delegates, George Washington and James Madison, would go on to become presidents.

# ORIGINAL TASK

- To find solutions and fix the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation
- What they did instead: wrote up an entirely new system of government, our Constitution