

# The Constitutional Convention

Unit 4 (part 2)

# Problems and Compromises

- ▶ Struggle for power between the small states and the large states
- ▶ Virginia Plan (James Madison) proposed two houses of Congress based on population
- ▶ Large states would control the government
- ▶ Houses would appoint other government officers which would allow large states to control the entire government
- ▶ New Jersey Plan a.k.a Small State Plan (small states) proposed one house of Congress
- ▶ Presented by William Patterson at Philadelphia Convention - all states would be represented equally regardless of size

# Problems and Compromises

- ▶ Great or Connecticut Compromise which allowed the new government two houses of Congress
- ▶ House of Representative, each state would be represented according to population (satisfying large states)
- ▶ Senate, each state would be represented equally (satisfying small states)
- ▶ Three-Fifths Compromise, allowed  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the slaves to be counted toward the number of representatives the state would get in the House of Representatives

# Delegate Distrust of the People

- ▶ Delegates distrusted the people
- ▶ **Electors** from the states would decide who the president should be not the people
- ▶ **Electoral college**, assigned electors to each state
- ▶ The total number of senators and representatives in Congress determined the number of electors.
- ▶ *Later in history*, electors in the Electoral College would be required to vote for the presidential candidate that won the popular vote in their state
- ▶ Popular vote, the vote of the people

# Delegate Distrust of the People

- ▶ Distrust of the people is evident in the election of United States senators
- ▶ Constitutional Convention decided senators would be elected by state legislators, not by the people
- ▶ 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment changed this, the people are allowed to elect their own senators
- ▶ Lack of trust was due to the lack of common man represented at the convention
- ▶ 40 of the 55 delegates were wealthy enough to have loaned money to the government
- ▶ 15 were slaveholders
- ▶ 14 held western land

# Delegate Distrust of the People

- ▶ None of the delegates were small farmers or working men
- ▶ Writers of the Constitution had some distrust of democracy, however they wrote a document that was flexible enough to provide the basis for orderly change
- ▶ Examples of additional democracy would be how many more people can vote, run for office, obtain education and exercise individual rights
- ▶ **Democracy**, simply government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives

# Ratification

- ▶ In order for the Constitution to go into effect, 9 states had to approve it
- ▶ Convention adjourned September 17, 1787
- ▶ Constitution was supported by Federalists
- ▶ Lead Federalists, Hamilton, Jay and Madison published the Federalists Papers
- ▶ Papers were important in convincing the people that the Constitution was of value
- ▶ Anti-Federalist fought against the Constitution, but were not successful
- ▶ June 21, 1788, Constitution took effect when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it. (remaining 4 states joined by 1790)
- ▶ Federalists and Anti-Federalists battled over the Constitution and became two separate political forces under the new government

# Ratification

- ▶ January 7, 1789 held its 1<sup>st</sup> presidential election
- ▶ White men who owned property allowed to vote
- ▶ Selected electors who voted for the candidates
- ▶ Electoral College system is still used

# Our First President

- ▶ April 30, 1789 George Washington was sworn into office after winning the election
- ▶ Washington was a Virginia landowner, led the patriotic forces in the war against the British, delegate at both continental congresses, named commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, president of the Constitutional Convention
- ▶ Washington 69 votes, Federalist John Adams (Massachusetts) 34 votes made him the vice president
- ▶ (Prior to the ratification of the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the candidate who received the most votes became the president and the runner up became vice president)

# Citizenship and Becoming President

- ▶ Article 2, Section 1 “No person except a natural-born citizen...shall be eligible to the office of president”
- ▶ Delegates did not want a foreigner running for highest office
- ▶ Immigrants become *naturalized* citizens
- ▶ Naturalized citizens cannot become president, only natural-born citizens are eligible