The Constitutional Convention (1787)

Compromise, Compromise, Compromise!!!
Articles of Conf. Collapse
Failures Force Changes

- Articles of Confederation = too weak to deal with the major issues
- Debt, currency, national defense, border disputes, etc.
- Delegates meet in Philadelphia, PA (Summer 1787)
Ideas that Influenced the Delegates

• Greeks (Athenian Democracy)
• *demos* = people, *kratos* = power/force
• Roman Republic
• The Enlightenment Thinkers: Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire
John Locke

• English philosopher
• Believed that individuals had certain natural rights = “life, liberty, & property”
• Government’s job is to protect these rights
• If gov’t doesn’t protect these rights, then revolution is necessary
Charles de Montesquieu

- French Philosopher
- Believed that government worked best when it was divided into three branches:
  - Legislative = to make the laws
  - Executive = to enforce or carry out the laws
  - Judicial = to interpret the law
Jean Jacques Rousseau

• Geneva, Switzerland
• The only good gov’t is one that is formed from the “consent of the governed”
• Consent of the governed = power of the government directly comes from the people
• the common good = doing what’s best for all of us
• Social Contract
Voltaire

• French philosopher

• Believed in the separation of church & state (highly critical of the Roman Catholic Church for being too involved in politics)

• Freedom of thought & expression (did not believe in government censorship)
Representation in Congress?

- New Jersey Plan = unicameral system (one body); every state has equal representation
- Virginia Plan = bicameral system (two bodies: lower house & upper house); based solely on population
- The Great Compromise (Roger Sherman of Connecticut)
The Great Compromise

Two Bodies of Congress:
• House of Representatives = population
• Senate = 2 per state
How many Presidents? Who will choose him/her?

- Some wanted a council of presidents
- Some wanted one president
- Some wanted Congress to choose the president
- Others wanted the president chosen by the people

*Decision = one president chosen by an electoral college*
Slavery & Representation

• North vs. South
• Regional conflict
• Would slaves be counted in the official census?
• Three-Fifths Compromise
• $\frac{3}{5}$ths of the slave population would count towards representation
James Madison

- Father of the Constitution
- Kept very detailed journals
- Becomes its strongest supporter
- Argued that factions were the key to a balanced gov’t
7 Articles of the Constitution

- Article I = Legislative Branch (very specific powers given to Congress)
- Article II = Executive Branch (led by the President)
- Article III = The Courts
- Article IV = responsibilities of the states
- Article V = process for amending the Constitution
- Article VI = debts must be paid, supremacy of the Constitution, and no religious qualifications
- Article VII = 9 states must ratify
September 1787 = The Debate Begins

• Constitution released to the public
• Federalists = support the Constitution; stronger central gov’t is needed
• Anti-Federalists = opposed to the Constitution; fear too much government power; no protection of individual rights
• Delaware is the first to ratify it – Dec. 7, 1787
• New Hampshire is the 9th state to ratify = June 21, 1788
• Rhode Island is the last state = May 29, 1790
Bill of Rights

• Amendments 1 through 10 get added
• To protect individual liberties & calm the concerns of the Anti-Federalists