

10 DAYS THAT UNEXPECTEDLY CHANGED AMERICA:

Shay's Rebellion



1. What were the major complaints of Shays and his followers?

2. What goals did Shays have for the rebellion?

3. Why was Shays' Rebellion considered to be the United States' first civil war?

4. How did Shays' Rebellion reveal these weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?

5. What provisions were included in the Articles for a federal government?

6. What could have been included in the Articles to help the emerging nation recover from war?

7. What role did Shays' Rebellion play in the creation of the Constitution?

8. What was the Riot Act?

9. What punishment did Shays and the lead rebels receive for their actions?

10. Do you think their treatment was just? Discuss.

PART TWO: Continental Congress on November 15, 1777 as an agreement between the states. This document served as the nation's constitution until 1789 when the present day Constitution was adopted in 1787. After reading this excerpt, respond to the questions listed below.

EXCERPT FROM THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION:

Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled. The said States hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever.

1. How would you describe core ideas of each of these two statements from the Articles of Confederation? What do you think the authors of the Articles meant when they described the states as being in a "firm league of friendship"? Why was a stronger document ultimately important?

2. Based on these statements, and what you have learned from this documentary, why do you think the founding fathers found it necessary to form a more formal Constitution?