



The Constitutional Convention

1787



The Annapolis Convention

- a. The inability of the government under the Articles of Confederation to tax, to raise money to fund the government and to pay off the debts of the American Revolution, led to the creation of the Annapolis Convention.
- b. Their belief was that the Articles of Confederation framework gave too much power to the states— especially in economic matters. Plus, it was too difficult to change, or to amend.
- c. The framers wanted a stronger national government because they feared the power of state legislatures and the courts— especially in economic matters. But, they also feared that the state governments would soon trample on the rights of individuals, as well. Plus, they feared that the government under the Articles of Confederation was too weak to defend the nation or to quell domestic unrest.

The Constitutional Convention

- a. It was the Virginia Plan, developed largely by James Madison which gave us our republican form of government featuring three branches– legislative, executive and judicial, plus a system of checks and balances. The major issue was representation in the new Congress, which was solved by the Great Compromise: the House of Representatives would be based on population, while each state would have two Senators who could vote independently.
- b. Slaves would count as $\frac{3}{5}$ of a person, and the slave trade was to be ended in 1808. The chief executive became the office of the President of the United States who would serve a four-year term in office.
- c. Three of the framers– Edmund Randolph, Elbridge Gerry and George Mason refused to sign the Constitution because they feared the document gave the central or national government too much power. It was their desire to have a Bill of Rights added to the Constitution.