Chapter 7 Section 2

I. Economic Depression

    A. The United States went through a depression, or a time when economic activity slowed and unemployment increased, after the Revolutionary War.

        1. Because Southern plantations were damaged during the war, they could not produce as much rice as prior to the war. As a result, rice exports dropped

        2. Farmers could not sell the goods they grew and therefore did not have money to pay state taxes. As a result, farmers lost their lands when state

officials took their farms to pay the debt they owed. Some farmers were even jailed.

3. American trade fell off when Britain closed the West Indies to American merchants. As a result, currency was in short supply, and whatever was around was used to pay the war debt.

B. The Shay's Rebellion occurred as a result of the problems farmers suffered. In 1787 Daniel Shay led a group of more than 1,000 angry farmers in forcing courts in western Massachusetts to close so

judges could not seize farmers' land.

C. Shays led the farmers toward the federal arsenal in Springfield, Massachusetts, for arms and ammunition. The farmers did not stop, even when the state militia fired over their heads and then directly at them, killing four. The uprising was over when Shays and his followers scattered.

D. Americans felt the impact of the Shays uprising. Many were scared that future uprisings could occur.

II. The Constitutional Convention

A. The Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia beginning in

May 1787 and consisted of 55 delegates, none of whom were Native American, African American, or women.

B. Several leaders stood out- George Washington, Ben Franklin, James Wilson, and James Madison (Father of the constitution).

C. George Washington presided. Rules:

1. Each state had one vote
2. Majority was needed to finalize decisions
3. Delegates from at least 7 of the 13 states were required for the meetings to be held

4. Delegates met behind closed doors so they could talk freely.