

# Constitutional Convention

Members  
Principles  
Agreements and  
compromises

## The Constitutional Convention, 1787

- ◆ 55 delegates attended but on a typical day 35 were present
- ◆ 29 held college degrees
- ◆ 34 were lawyers
- ◆ 24 served in the Continental Congress
- ◆ 21 were military officers of the American Revolution



Washington was elected president of the convention based on his integrity and past service to the colonies.

**What does this painting show about the delegates at the convention?**



## Members were...

- ◆ Not small farmers, free African-Americans, women, or Native Americans
- ◆ Most were statesmen, lawyers, planters, bankers, businessmen
- ◆ Most under age 50
- ◆ All male
- ◆ All white

## Absent

- ◆ John Adams- ambassador to England
- ◆ Thomas Jefferson- ambassador to France
- ◆ Patrick Henry- “smelled a rat”
- ◆ Sam Adams- not chosen by state to be part of the delegation

## Famous Members

- ◆ Alexander Hamilton- leader of strong government
- ◆ George Washington- chairman of the convention
- ◆ James Madison- ‘father of the Constitution’
- ◆ Benjamin Franklin- oldest member at 81 was also at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress

## Principles of the Constitution

- ◆ **Checks and Balances** – A political system in which branches of government have some authority over the actions of the other branches
- ◆ **Limited Government** – the idea that government is not all powerful, but can only do what the people allow it to.

## Principles of the Constitution

- ◆ **Federalism** – the division of power between a central government and states
  - National level
  - State level
  - Local level

## Principles of the Constitution

- ◆ **Popular Sovereignty** – the people rule. The power of the government is based on the consent of the governed.
- ◆ **Separation of powers** – the division of the government into three separate branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

## Agreements and Compromises

- ◆ All agreed that rights to property should be protected.
- ◆ Ben Franklin proposed universal suffrage for all males, but most wanted only those with land to vote
- ◆ Most delegates favored a bicameral legislature

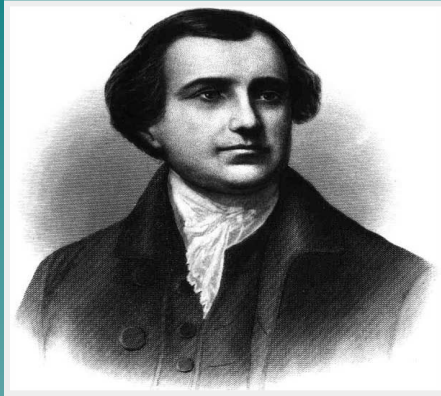
## Agreements and Compromises

- ◆ Virginia Plan- favored by large states
  - Proposed by James Randolph
  - Written by James Madison
  - Endorsed by Alexander Hamilton
- ◆ government with a bicameral legislature
  - Large house elected by popular vote
  - Smaller (upper) house chosen by larger (lower) house members from nominees chosen by state legislatures
  - Number of Representatives based on population

## Agreements and Compromises

- ◆ New Jersey Plan- favored by small states
  - Proposed by William Paterson
  - Unicameral house
  - Each state one vote
  - Did not require a strong central government

## The Architects of Compromise



Edmund Randolph proposed the Virginia Plan.

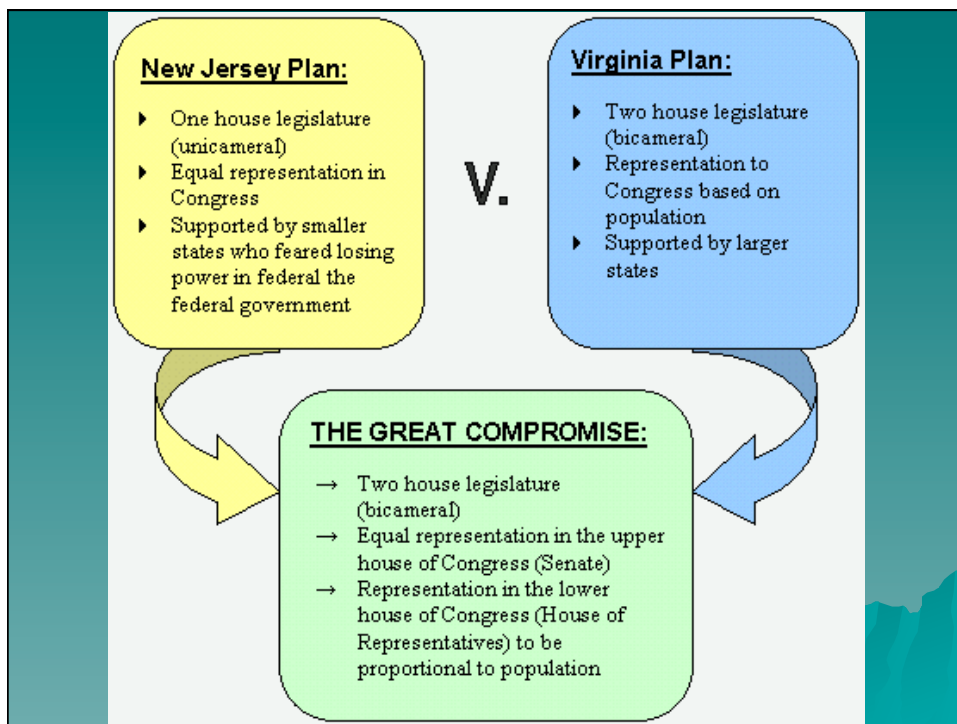


Roger Sherman proposed the Great Compromise.

## The Great Compromise

- ◆ Aka: Connecticut Compromise
- ◆ Bicameral house- benefit all states
  - One house called Senate
    - ◆ Members chosen by the state legislatures
    - ◆ Each state gets one vote
  - One house called House of Representatives
    - ◆ Members chosen by population
    - ◆ Number of members based on population

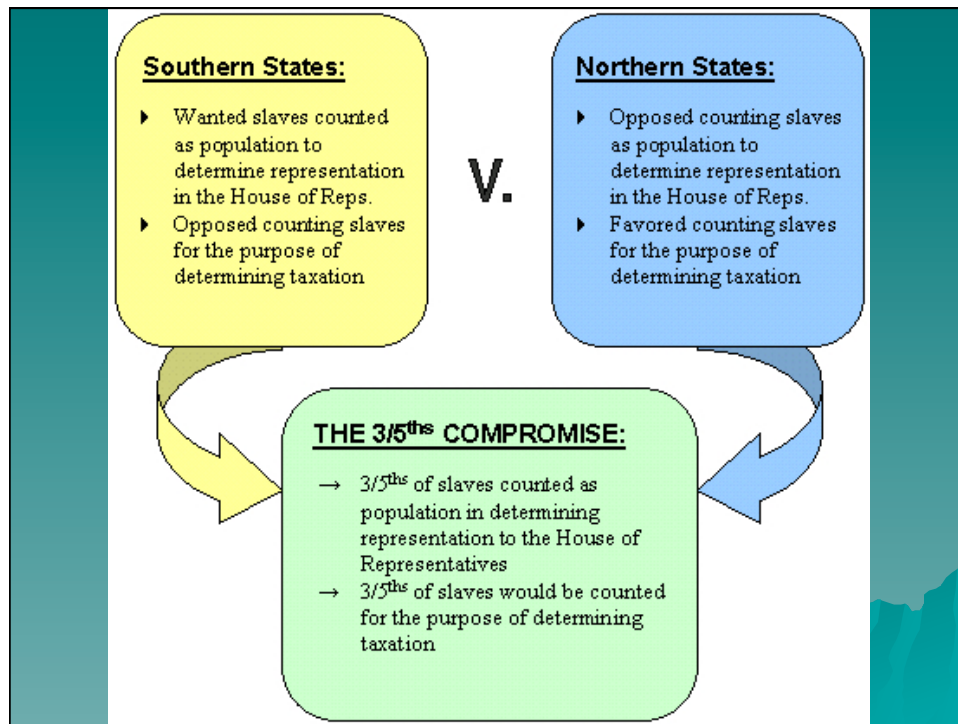




## Agreements and Compromises

- ◆ Three-fifths clause
  - favors Southern states
  - All slaves would be counted in the census for representation in the House as 3/5ths, and would also be counted when states were taxed.
- ◆ No taxes on exports
- ◆ No interference with the slave trade for 20 years
- ◆ Quickwrite & Discuss: Looking at all of this, and thinking about Sectionalism as described by Morgan, who would this benefit and why?





## Agreements and Compromises

- ◆ Electoral College
  - People chosen by the state legislatures
  - Vote for president and vice-president
  - Supposed to reflect the will of the people

## Criticism of Founders

- ◆ Beard's and Zinn's criticisms:
  - Founders interested in protecting property- their own
  - All agreements based on their own economic welfare
  - Most scholars determine that the criticism is false because the voting did not follow their own interests but those of their state

## Criticism of Constitution

- ◆ Does not protect the rights of the individual
- ◆ Does not protect states rights
- ◆ Gives a central authority too much power

## Lecture Review

- ◆ Grab a chromebook and login
  - Go to [mrmcmurray.com](http://mrmcmurray.com) and go to the US History page
  - Under today's date click the lecture review google form and complete it
  - We will discuss the data once I have all of the submissions