**Articles of Confederation**

*Drafted in 1796 by John Dickinson, the Articles of Confederation established a single-chamber national Congress elected by state legislatures, in which each state held only one vote. These Articles notably left out both and executive and judicial branch, and provided Congress no power to tax or regulate commerce. However, the Articles established states’ rights and also provided for American independence, uniting all the colonies during the war.*

**Maryland, cession of western land claims:** Maryland waited to agree to the new government until lands north of the Ohio River were turned over to the United States in 1779. Maryland did not want big states (NY, VA) to grow and dominate the new nation, instead equalizing the power of the states and opening the union up for expansion.

**STRENGTHS OF THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION:** The thirteen states established a permanent government in 1781 in the form of a confederation which included a congress that represented the states and had the power to conduct Indian and foreign affairs, mediate disputes between states, and establish a standard for weights and measures. The Articles protected against an oppressive central government, such as a monarchy or oligarchy, by placing power within the fragmented states.

**WEAKNESSES OF THE ARTCILES OF CONFEDERATION:** The government established in 1781, was a confederation; each state was its own powerful entity and had its own tariffs and currencies, making it harder for interstate commerce to occur. The federal government lacked the power to tax and form a militia without the approval of all the states. Amending the Articles was a difficult and tedious process, because the amendment would have to be accepted by each state in order to be passed.

**Northwest Posts:** After the Revolutionary war, the British did not leave their posts in an effort to preserve both the flourishing fur trade and the improving relations with the Native Americans. This showed Britain’s unwillingness to give up and the weakness of the American government, problems which culminated in the War of 1812.

**Land Ordinance of 1785:** Congress enacted this law to set a uniform procedure for surveying land in 1785. It established that the settlement of a town would be six square miles and would contain land set aside for schools, setting a precedent for the public education system in the United States.

**Northwest Ordinance, 1787:** Congress passed this law to define the steps for the formation and admission of states into the Union in 1787. It applied to the lands north of the Ohio River which had been established as the Northwest Territory. The existence of slavery could be determined by popular sovereignty in these territories.

**Shays’ Rebellion:** A group of Massachusetts farmers led by Daniel Shays protested after taxes were raised to pay for Revolutionary debts in 1786. The high taxes, combined with the depression that hit after British markets were lost, forced the farmers to revolt. The result was an increase in tension between the North and South.

**Annapolis Convention, 1786:** A group of delegates from five states met in Annapolis, Maryland in 1786, in an effort to solve the problems of interstate commerce. Because there was little representation, the delegates decided that a convention of all states should be held the year after in order to amend the Articles of Confederation.

**1780’s depression:** The first major depression of the American states occurred after the Revolutionary War in New England. The causes included high taxes imposed to finance the war debt, the tightening of credit, and a short growing season that kept crop yields low. Shays’ rebellion occurred ultimately because of this depression