

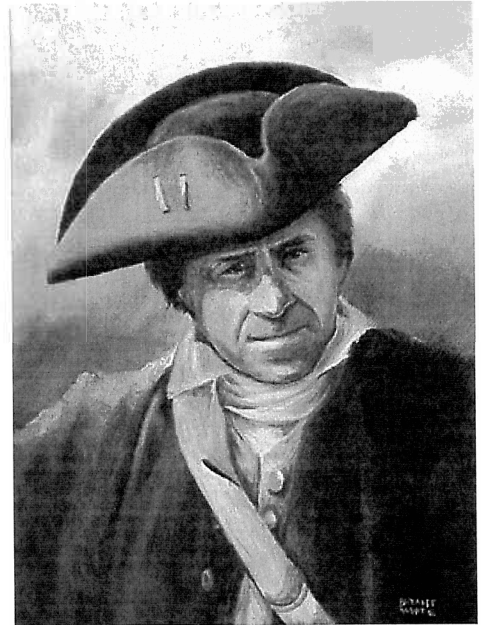
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## Shays' Rebellion Worksheet

*"A little rebellion now and then is a good thing. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government. God forbid that we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion."*

*-Thomas Jefferson*



Daniel Shays was a colonial army captain who was wounded during the Revolutionary war. When he returned home he was summoned to court for unpaid debts, which he could not pay because he was not paid for his military service. Daniel Shays was alarmed to discover that many of his fellow veterans and farmers were in the same financial situation as he. He helped lead a rebellion and protest against politicians, economic injustice, and inequitable laws such as excessive taxes on property, unjust court actions, heavy polling taxes, costly lawsuits, and an unstable currency. He pressed for an issue of paper money.

The Revolutionary War was over and the country was in chaos under the Articles of Confederation. In the summer of 1786, the "Regulators," as the rebels called themselves, forced courts in Massachusetts to close. The Massachusetts's Governor quickly raised a private army to restore the courts and to protect the state.



On January, 25<sup>th</sup>, 1787, Shays led insurgents to the Federal Arsenal in Springfield with about 1,500 armed men behind him. This was the most violent event of the wide-spread rebellion that ended in the bloody clash at the arsenal as the rebels attempted to seize the muskets, cannon, barracks, and ammunition stored here.

The Massachusetts militia fired several cannons into the ranks of the advancing rebels, killing four and wounding many more. No muskets were fired by either side. Crying "murder", Shays' men scattered in disarray.

Fourteen of the rebel leaders, including Shays, were soon sentenced to death for treason. Pardoned months later by newly-elected Governor John Hancock, only two men were later hung, and they as outlaws. By that summer, Hancock and the newly-elected Massachusetts Legislature began the work of reform.

That following summer, the Federal Constitutional Convention Philadelphia struggled to create a stronger central government that would "establish justice and insure domestic tranquility." Shays' Rebellion is today considered one of the major events leading to the formation of the United States Constitution.



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## Shays' Rebellion Worksheet

*Use the information from the video and reading to answer the following questions.*

1. What did the rebels call themselves and what did they force?
2. Where did Daniel Shays lead the insurgents and what did they want to seize?
3. What sentence was handed down to the rebel leaders? and for what?
4. What did John Hancock do after he was elected governor of Massachusetts?
5. Shays' Rebellion lead to the formation of what?