



# Shays Rebellion

# Shays Rebellion - 1786

Every state was having economic trouble in the mid-1780's due to Revolutionary War debt.



The Massachusetts legislature voted the heaviest direct tax in its' history.

Massachusetts insisted in payment by gold or silver which were very scarce.



Many farmers had borrowed heavily to buy more land, and seed and now found they couldn't pay what they owed.

The courts began to seize land and put farmers in jail because they couldn't pay their loans.

# Shays Rebellion



**DANIEL SHAYS** lead a rebellion of about 1,500 men, mostly farmers.

They were upset about paying high taxes and wanted debt relief from the government.

The government did not help them so they gathered together and marched on the courts that were taking the farmers land and sending them to debtors prison.



They figured if the courts weren't open they couldn't keep taking away land or throwing any more farmers in jail.

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In five months of attacks the militia was never called in to stop the uprising.



In their final attack the rebels decided to march on the federal arsenal – a storage place for weapons.



Finally, about 900 state militia men were sent to stop the uprising. 4 of Shays men were killed and 24 were wounded. 14 others, including Shays were sentenced to death for treason. But newly elected Governor John Hancock pardoned the men.



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The general public sided with the farmers against the state.

Massachusetts was very close to chaos because of taxes.



The Federalist's used Shay's rebellion as an example of civil unrest.

They argued that a strong national government was needed to settle this kind of dispute.

Shays rebellion proved the federal government was too weak and a stronger national government was needed.