

# WASAH 2009-2010 Lesson Proposal

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I have decided to focus my 2009-2010 WASAH inspired lesson on “Shay’s Rebellion” of 1786-87. I personally would like to learn more about this topic because it was a major contributor toward the United States’ transformation from a Confederation of 13 individual, autonomous States to the Federal Republic we know today. Many students (and teachers) often assume that the Declaration of Independence & 1783 Treaty of Paris were the beginnings of our current nation. The fact that the original “United States of America” was a confederation is often lost on the learner. The 6 years between 1783-89 are critical to any successful American self-determination. “Shays Rebellion” is a reaction to a desperate post-war social and economic crisis from the common farmers and laborers of Western Massachusetts and other newly independent States. Many of the “rebels” felt the American Revolution had not gone far enough to bring the freedoms and democracy they had expected.

Incidentally, this rebellion being named after Daniel Shays can be considered by some to be a misnomer. Daniel Shays was one of several Continental Army veterans that rallied farmers in the Western counties of Massachusetts. He did not lead the entire force of “Regulators” (the name given to the Rebel militia), rather, a part of it raised in Hampshire Co. Shays was also not present at the initial court house protests that began the rebellion. Former Continental Army Major Luke Day, a jailed debtor and instigator of the first protests, may be a more fitting namesake of this rebellion.

Professors Barker & Voelker could be very helpful for guidance in my lesson preparation and research as this era falls into their realms of expertise. Networking with other WASAH members has, and will continue to be, quite beneficial. Some have already suggested the History Channel series: 10 Events that Unexpectedly Changed American History DVD programs. I have viewed the *Antietam* program, but, had forgotten there is one specifically on Shay’s Rebellion.

I work very closely with Mike Rindt, our other 8<sup>th</sup> grade history teacher at Prairie River Middle School in Merrill. Mike & I constantly bring new ideas to each other regarding the lessons we teach and I’m certain he will be interested in this new information on Daniel Shays. Mike incorporated some of my Colony Game enhancements I designed for last year’s WASAH lesson, and, offered some interesting ideas of his own that I have adopted.

I envision our study of “Shay’s rebellion” lasting approximately 3 days to an entire week. The lessons will fit into our instruction of the challenges of the Articles and the need for a constitution. The expectation is this will occur in late January-early February. I would like to incorporate the website: *Shay’s Rebellion & the Making of a Nation*: <http://www.shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/>.

I came upon this website during my morning prep time last March and was fascinated by its contents. It is very visual and interactive. I may want to reserve some lab time to allow the students to access and perhaps create a website “scavenger hunt” for them to locate information. The website has several primary sources from eye witnesses that will be beneficial for the students to read and evaluate for bias, point-of-view, etc... In keeping with our WASAH theme, I want students to evaluate the Rebels’ view of freedom and democracy and why they felt entitled to interfere with courts proceedings. A key point for student debate is: How far can citizens go to change a government system that is not benefitting them? I also want students to evaluate the opinions on the rebellion given by former revolutionaries: Samuel Adams, Ben Franklin, George Washington, & Thomas Jefferson.

## WI Academic Standards potentially covered in these lessons:

### History

- B.8.1 Interpret the past using a variety of sources, such as biographies, diaries, journals, artifacts, eyewitness interviews, and other primary source materials, and evaluate the credibility of sources used
- B.8.2 Employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and the present in United States and world history
- B.8.3 Describe the relationships between and among significant events, such as the causes and consequences of wars in United States and world history
- B.8.4 Explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending upon the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians
- B.8.5 Use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice, and express the position coherently
- B.8.6 Analyze important political values such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice embodied in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights
- B.8.7 Identify significant events and people in the major eras of United States and world history
- B.8.10 Analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, or nations

### Political Science

- C.8.1 Identify and explain democracy's basic principles, including individual rights, responsibility for the common good, equal opportunity, equal protection of the laws, freedom of speech, justice, and majority rule with protection for minority rights

C.8.3 Explain how laws are developed, how the purposes of government are established, and how the powers of government are acquired, maintained, justified, and sometimes abused

C.8.8 Identify ways in which advocates participate in public policy debates

## **Economics**

D.8.1 Describe and explain how money makes it easier to trade, borrow, save, invest, and compare the value of goods and services

D.8.6 Identify and explain various points of view concerning economic issues, such as taxation, unemployment, inflation, the national debt, and distribution of income

## **Behavioral Sciences**

E.8.1 Give examples to explain and illustrate the influence of prior knowledge, motivation, capabilities, personal interests, and other factors on individual learning

E.8.3 Describe the ways in which local, regional, and ethnic cultures may influence the everyday lives of people

E.8.4 Describe and explain the means by which individuals, groups, and institutions may contribute to social continuity and change within a community

E.8.5 Describe and explain the means by which groups and institutions meet the needs of individuals and societies

E.8.14 Describe cooperation and interdependence among individuals, groups, and nations, such as helping others in times of crisis

## **Resources**

*Shay's Rebellion & the Making of a Nation*: <http://www.shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/> - great site for primary sources

Fleming, Thomas. Liberty! The American Revolution. Viking Publishing. New York: 1997.  
*pgs 354,355,356,365,374*

Gillon, Steven. 10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America. Three Rivers Press. Pittsburgh: 2006.

Raphael, Ray. A People's History of the American Revolution. Harper Perennial. New York: 2002. *pg 390*

Raphael, Ray. Founding Myths – Stories that Hide Our Patriotic Past. The New Press. New York: 2004. *pgs 58, 82, 332, 333*

Zinn, Howard. A People's History of the United States. Harper Perennial. New York: 1990.  
*pgs 90-94, 97*

History Channel DVD Series - 10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America- Shay's Rebellion: America's First Civil War. History Channel: 2006