

Constitutional Convention



- **May 25, 1787**
- **Goal: revise & improve the Articles of Confederation**
- **All but Rhode Island show up**
- **55 delegates there**



- **Important people:**

- **George Washington**

- President of the Convention**

- **Alexander Hamilton**

- delegate from NY**

- **James Madison**

- “Father of the Constitution”**



- Realized they couldn't improve the Articles, so they started from scratch
- Arguments start between big and little states



• The Virginia Plan

—By James Madison

—Called for a strong central govt

- Legislative --> pass laws

 - Have two houses (**bicameral**), seats by population

- Judicial --> decide if laws are carried out properly

- Executive --> execute laws



• **The New Jersey Plan**

- Small states didn't like the VA Plan b/c big states get more power
- 3 branches **BUT** the legislative branch have **ONE** house and **ONE** vote per state
- Natl govt could tax and regulate trade



- **The Great Compromise**

- Argued with no end in sight
- Roger Sherman from CT found a **compromise** (agreement)

- **Two-house legislature**

1. **Lower house - House of Representatives**

by popular vote & state population

2. **Upper house - Senate**

2 regardless of population



- Arguments between N & S began

- **Three-Fifths Compromise**

- South wanted the slave population to count towards their numbers in H of Rep
- North says no BUT want slave population to count for tax purposes

- **Compromise!!**

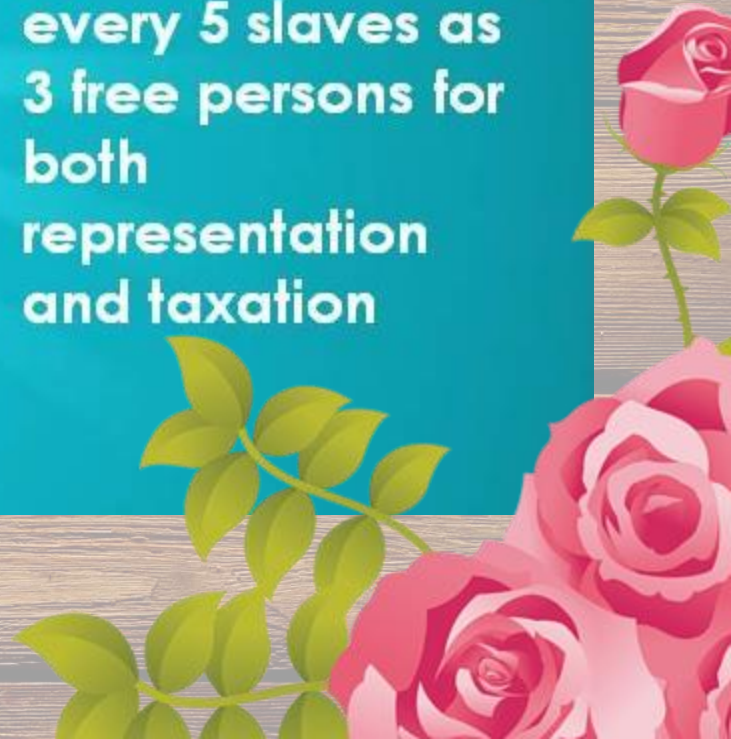
3/5 of state slave population count for taxes and representation

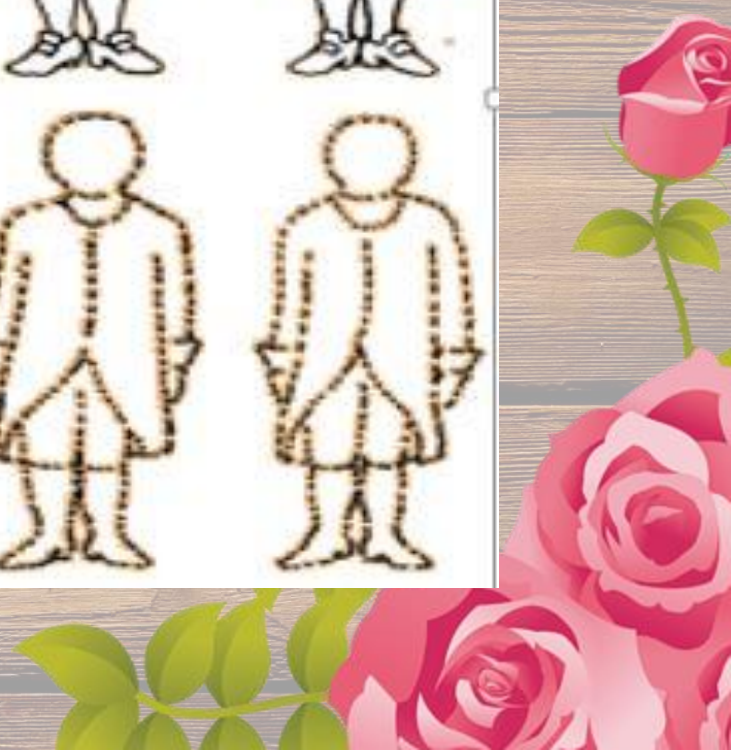
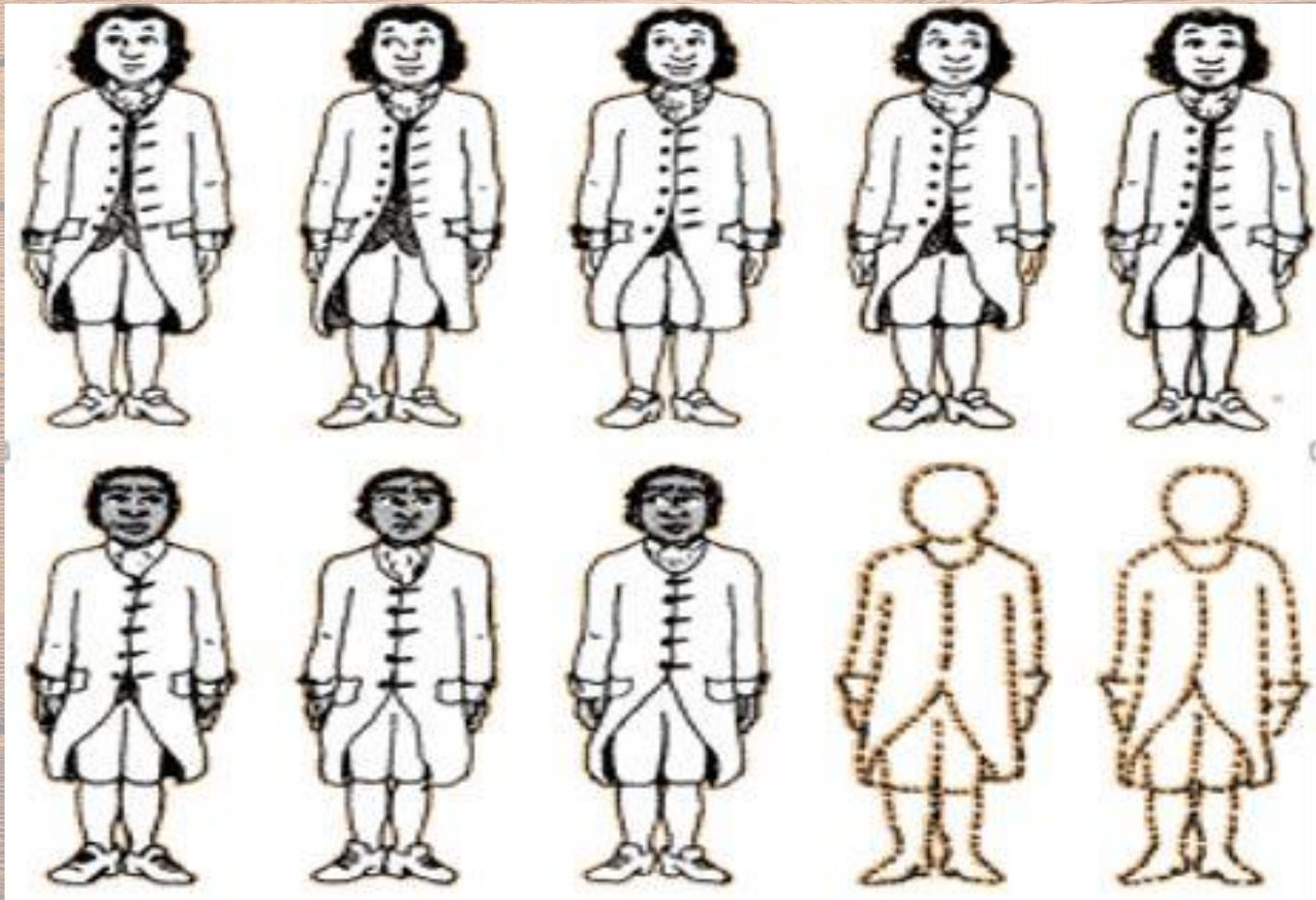


Fig 8.3 3/5^{THS} COMPROMISE



The Northern and Southern States compromised by agreeing to count every 5 slaves as 3 free persons for both representation and taxation





- **Slave Trade**

- By 1787, some N states ban slave trade within their borders - argues that S should too

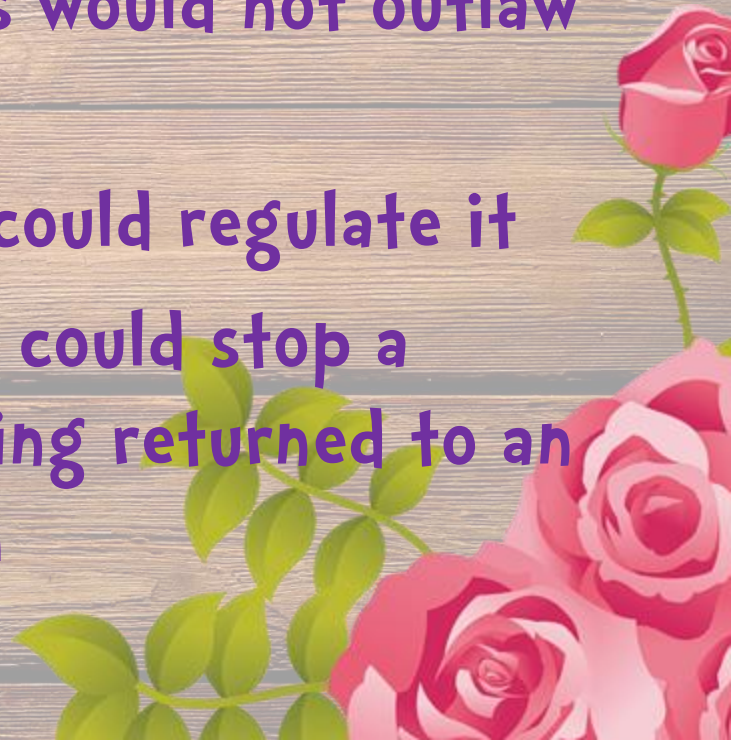
- S says it will ruin their economy

- **Compromise!!**

- N agreed that congress would not outlaw slavery for 20 years

- after that, congress could regulate it

- N agreed that no state could stop a fugitive slave from being returned to an owner who claimed him



Reflection Question

Why is the issue of slavery referred to as “unfinished business” after the Constitutional Convention?



Ideas Behind the Constitution

Magna Carta & English Bill of Rights

- Written declaration of citizen's rights

Roman Republic

- representative govt
- Citizens involved in govt

Constitution

Enlightenment

- Recognizes natural rights
- Separation of powers (branches)

American Experience

- Experience fighting for independence
- Struggle to form a strong central govt