



1787

The Constitutional Convention

**We
don't
count!**

The 3/5's Compromise

The conflict over **slavery** was complicated. **Slavery** had existed in some form throughout the history of the world for thousands of years. In the 13 Colonies, **slavery** was established shortly after the early settlements were established. Although many of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were personally opposed to **slavery**, all of them recognized that many of the agricultural plantations depended on **slaves** for the workers. The institution of **slavery** was universally accepted in the South and there were **slaves** working in most of the colonies.

Delegates from three of the southern states threatened that their states would refuse to be a part of the national government if it denied their citizens the right to buy, sell, and own **slaves**.

Delegates from other states opposed **slavery**, but they wanted the southern states to be a part of the United States.

The southern states wanted to count the **slaves** as population for representation in the new Congress. The northern states didn't want the **slaves** to count if they had no rights as citizens. They thought this would give the South an unfair advantage in votes taken in the House of Representatives. Finally the two sides reached a compromise. The **slaves** would count as 3/5 of a person for representation in the House of Representatives.

Placard #1