NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Blast From the Past: Shay's Rebellion

Michael Sean Winters | Aug. 12, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Not every entry in the Compton?s Encyclopedia from 1970 appears dated. In fact, the following entry might be very timely if you choose to attend a Tea Party meeting. Yesterday morning, driving up to Vermont, I drove through Western Massachusetts where Shays? Rebellion took place. The Tea Party crowd likes to talk about rebellion but they tend to forget that this early rebellion was crushed because it was undertaken against a non-tyrannical, legitimate government. Indeed, Shays? Rebellion helped pave the way for the calling of the Constitutional Convention which produced the document the tea Party crowd claims to celebrate.

?After the American Revolutionary War the young nation was torn by unsettled economic conditions. Paper money was in circulation, but little of it was honored at face value. Farmers especially were thrown into debt. They wanted more paper money to relieve the crisis; but merchants and other ?sound money? men wanted currencies with gold backing. In Massachusetts the ?sound money? men controlled the government; and the quarrel grew until thousands of men in the western counties rose up in armed revolt. They were led by Daniel Shays (1747?-1825), a Revolutionary War captain. Shays? Rebellion lasted from August 1786 to February 1787?.The revolt was checked when the militia fired on Shays? party some distance from their goal, the federal arsenal at Springfield. The leaders were condemned to death for treason, but were later pardoned. Shays himself later received a war pension. Shays? Rebellion was one of several disturbances in different states. It hastened the movement for a Federal government strong enough to ?ensure domestic tranquility,? as stated in the preamble to the Constitution which established the United States.?

Source URL (retrieved on *07/28/2014 - 00:54*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/blast-past-shays-rebellion?splash=