

Hamilton vs. Jefferson

Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson were both important founding fathers in the early days of the American nation, yet they despised each other. Unfortunately, George Washington thought they'd be great together and put Hamilton as his Secretary of the Treasury and Jefferson as Secretary of State. They held many differences in their past and their appearance, and as they began to work together, it became clear that their beliefs vastly differed as well, especially when interpreting the Constitution. It didn't help that Hamilton was a Federalist and Jefferson was a Democratic-Republican (anti-federalist), eventually leading to a nation with political parties after Washington left office. However, they did work together at times when it was absolutely necessary, such as keeping America out of a war with Europe during the French Revolution. The outcome, though, did not help their relationship as Jefferson soon began to represent France and Hamilton Britain. Eventually, Hamilton would help Jefferson become elected as the third president (as he hated the opponent, Aaron Burr (someone he held as a man with no principles) greater than Jefferson (someone with policies and beliefs different than him)). Hamilton's demise would soon come from Burr, however, in a deadly duel.

1. power vs. freedom
 - H=common welfare of the majority
 - J=individual rights of the minority
2. broad vs. narrow Constitution
 - H=Art. I, sec. 8 that "Congress shall have the power to... provide for the common defense and the general welfare" and "make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers"
 - J=Amend. 10 that "the powers not delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution; nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."
3. business vs. ideas
 - H=man of affairs, America's "1st businessman"
 - J=man of intellect, America's "1st architect"
4. better sort vs. yeoman citizen
 - H=the Schuylers, Powells, Bingham
 - J=the war veterans like Shays, Shattucks
5. national bank
 - H=to establish the public credit for "greater good"
 - J= an "engine of corruption" by Duer, Reynolds
6. industry vs. farming
 - H=Society for Estab. of Useful Manufactures
 - J=agrarian self-sufficiency of Monticello
7. east vs. west
 - H=Atlantic shipping, equal tariff, Jay's Treaty
 - J=empire of liberty, growth westward, Greenville Treaty
8. Britain vs. France
 - H=join with Brit. against French Revolution
 - J=join with France, Cosway, Houdon, and the Patriots
9. scandal
 - H=Maria Reynolds - George Washington TV miniseries
 - J=Sally Hemmings

The Dawn of Political Parties

American history, historians frequently link Thomas Jefferson to the Democratic-Republican Party. True this may be, when Jefferson first took his post under George Washington, establishing a political party was not a desire. He wrote, "If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all." However, his ideology directly conflicted with his fellow cabinet member Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton gained favor with Washington during the War for Independence and became one of Washington's closest friends. The main issue dividing the two was the existence of a National Bank. Hamilton argued a strong national bank could pay off the nation's numerous debts and give creditors a personal stake in the success of the country. Jefferson feared a national bank would take money from the poor and put it in the hands of the rich. Jefferson worried that corrupt politicians could gain access to advance their own personal wealth. In spite of Jefferson's concerns, Washington supported the establishment of a National Bank in Philadelphia.

At this point, Jefferson was faced with a choice. He could leave office and allow Hamilton and his supporters control of the Executive Branch. Conversely, he could remain and do everything in his power to "quietly" impede Hamilton's goals. Realizing a controversy among his cabinet would endanger the budding nation, Washington convinced both men to continue their posts.

In Congress, the conflict over the National Bank and other financial legislation began polarizing the representatives. Those in favor of Hamilton's philosophies (see above) became known as the Federalists. Those favoring Jefferson's ideals became known as Republicans. James Madison, "Father of the Constitution", led the Republicans from 1793-1800.

In addition to the National Bank issue, the Revolution in France increasingly divided American ideology. In France, the disenfranchised peasants were attempting to overthrow the landed aristocracy. Samuel Eliot Morrison wrote, "The French Revolution seemed to some a clear-cut contest between monarchy and republicanism, oppression and liberty, autocracy and democracy; to others, simply a new breaking-out of the eternal strife between anarchy and order, atheism and religion, poverty and property. The former joined the Republican party; the latter, the Federalist."

Thomas Jefferson

Personal Characteristics:

Rambled when he talked
Mind jumped from topic to topic
Worn clothes
Gave impression of carelessness
Poetic
Creative
First American architect of his generation –
Monticello
Scandal – Sally Hemings

Constitution:

ANTI-FEDERALIST

Narrow / strict interpretation: Amendment 10

Position after Constitution:

Secretary of State

Philosophies:

- Decentralize (Spread) power
- Feared tyranny
- Championed liberty
- Held hope for human spirit
- Believed with education, humans could be trusted
- Supported agriculture

American Vision:

- Farming community
- Mild laws
- Equal opportunity

- Haven / Asylum for oppressed
- Preserve simplicity and equality
- Westward expansion

Foreign Policy:

- pro-France

Alexander Hamilton

Personal Characteristics:

Well-dressed
Orderly
Organized mind
Neat
Intense
Energetic

Scandal – Maria Reynolds

Constitution:

FEDERALIST

Broad / loose interpretation: “necessary and proper” clause

Position after Constitution:

Secretary of Treasury

Philosophies:

- Concentrate power with elite few
- Feared anarchy (“the Mob”)
- Championed order
- Held humans as inherently flawed
- Believed humans make poor choices

- Supported shipping and manufacture

American Vision:

- Success founded on commerce and wealth
- Strict laws
- Society of rich and poor based on English model
- Make America a new Europe
- Advance into new technological age
- Atlantic business / trade

Foreign Policy:

- pro-Britain