

The Federalist and Jeffersonian Parties

Hamilton was the founder of the Federalist Party. He was a lawyer and businessman from New England who observed the woes of the ineffective Articles of Confederation. His biggest issue was the lack of currency and measurement & weight standards for commerce; he viewed commerce as the backbone of any economy (and he is correct). Each of the colonies had their own currency and commonly taxed out-of-state imports in order to encourage citizens to buy local. The consequences of this, in essence, alienated states from trading with each other and causing commercial gridlock and inflation.

Hamilton saw how ineffective the Congress was under the Articles. It could not raise a military, compel taxes, standardize trade, or regulate commerce. Thus, he was the need for a strong central bank. The colonists feared any type of consolidated power due to what they had recently experienced under King George.

Washington, although politically unaffiliated, was a Federalist. He appointed Hamilton as the first Secretary of the Treasury and his policies favored the Federalist Party.

The Federalist Party died by 1820. John Adams was the only Federalist president. The Jeffersonians, or Anti-Federalists, favored the 'common man' and pitched their rhetoric as against a strong central government. This appealed to the average white, male (and propertied) voter of the early 1800's. The Jeffersonians eventually became the Democratic Party and had their first national convention in 1832 where they elected Andrew Jackson. The rest is history....