

# Feds and whigs



The statement “ Although historically represented as distinct parties, the Federalists and the Whigs in fact shared a common political ideology, represented many of the same interest groups, and proposed similar programs and policies” is partially true. Both the Federalists and the Whigs shared common political ideas of the same interests groups, and proposed similar programs and policies- such as Clay’s American system and Hamilton’s economic plan. Both parties also believed in the National Bank because they thought it was necessary and proper.

But, both parties had many differences as well. These differences consisted of representation, leadership and origination. The new supporters of the constitution became known as the Federalists. The Federalist Party was established originally to support the creation of a strong national government, after the Articles of Confederation were created in 1781. For twelve years, the new government was firmly controlled by the Federalists. The Federalists believed that the elites that would come to dominate both federal and state governments would act in interest of the entire nation.

The Federalists were largely wealthy, aristocratic men, originating from the New England area, especially New York. This party was led by Alexander Hamilton whom being a well-educated and wealthy man himself, was followed in part by men of the same standards and social class as him. Hamilton's financial system settled the problems caused by the revolutionary war, and the inconsistencies between the states and national governments rights when it came to taxation. One of the main ideas of the Federalist Party was that of a " loose interpretation" of the constitution.

This loose interpretation was used in determining the meaning of the elastic clause placed in the constitution. The federalist believed that because it would take hundreds of years to write down everything the U. S. government could do, the elastic clause was created. This clause allowed for the creation and addition of all things " necessary and proper" as needed by the national government. The Federalists used this clause in the case of the National Bank. The opposing side, the Anti-Federalists led by Thomas Jefferson, opposed a stronger national government.

They envied the tyranny they saw in the new government and compared its similarities to the British monarchies. Anti-Federalists felt the best protection against tyranny in a strong central government would be the power in individual states. They said a major problem was the new government being based on republican principles and lacked individual rights. The first two presidents of the United States belonged to the Federalists. George Washington was the perfect epitome of a federalist. During his presidency, he tried to limit the power of the executive branch and tried to limit the use of vetoes.

John Adams was another federalist president. He was also the last federalist president after Thomas Jefferson was inaugurated because the federalists could not agree on a vice president (the 12th amendment now prevents electing people from two different political parties). Since many Federalists were large landowners, bankers and businessmen, they favored the government's efforts to encourage and protect American industry.

Determined to turn the United States into a manufacturing power, Hamilton

began a gigantic economic reform. Hamilton's goals were to stabilize the economy, gain respect abroad, and pacify the Indians.

He believed that a stable and effective government required an enlightening class. Thus, the new government needed the support of the wealthy and in order to get that support, it needed elites. Hamilton proposed that the federal government take over all of the debts of the individual states. He also proposed the chartering of a national bank that could provide currency and loans to developing industries. At the time, there were only a few banks in the country. A new national bank would help fill the void that the absence of a well-developed banking system had created.

A national bank would also be a safe place to hold the government's money. It would help collect taxes. It would keep up the price of government bonds through judicious bond purchases. The bank would be chartered by the federal government and would have a monopoly of the government's own banking business. Hamilton proposed that the federal government use subsidies and tax incentives to spur industrial growth in America. He also proposed that these measures be paid for largely by high tariffs and foreign imports. He supported two kinds He did not envision paying off or eliminating the debt.

He wanted to create a large, permanent national debt, with new bonds being issued as the old bonds were being paid off. He believed that the wealthy class would result in lending money to the government, making the government survive. In the 1830s, the Whig Party emerged as the major opposition party to the party of President Jackson. The Whigs favored more

governmental involvement in commerce and favored the National Bank (like the Federalists) and industrial growth. They opposed rapid, uncontrollable settlement in the west. Southern and Northern businessmen supported the Whigs (they favored the wealth).

The Whig party was led by former National-Republicans Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. The platform of the Whigs bared remarkable similarities to that of the old Federalist Party. The Whigs supported a more active national government that would check the " excesses of unrestricted individualism. " The Whigs were also very supportive of the National Bank. They agreed with Hamilton in saying that it was " necessary and proper" in running the government and the economy smoothly. Henry Clay's American System was similar to Hamilton's economic system.

The goal was to make America economically independent by increasing industrial production in the United States and by the Creation of the Second National Bank (bank, tariff, and internal improvements). The 4 advantages of the Second National Bank were: credit to growing enterprises, restraining effect on small banks, paper money and a safe place to keep the government's money. Nicholas Biddle controlled it. " Soft Money" was anything that was made out of paper and " hard money" had to do with coin currency. Jackson hated the Second National Bank because it involved entrenched elites.

Biddle first tried to protect the Second National bank by granting financial favors. Clay sponsored a bill to re-charter the bank four years early to use as an issue against Jackson. Jackson vetoed the re-charter and it backfired on

Clay because Jackson won re-election. Jackson tried to kill the bank early by not putting government money into the bank. The bank tried to defend itself one last time by calling in loans and interest rates; it was unsuccessful. One difference between the Whigs and the Federalist however, was that the Whigs were more in support of the "common man" than their opponents had ever been.

Anyone who understood banking joined the Whigs, especially after the terrible banking problems experienced during Jackson's administration. Those with ideas similar to Hamilton, who rejected the administration's refusal to approach economic problems from a broadly national perspective, also joined in large numbers. The Whig party nominated three unsuccessful candidates for the presidential election in 1836. In 1840, however, William Henry Harrison and vice president John Tyler were nominated and elected. The Whigs triumphed over this victory, but soon after Harrison died, and Tyler became president.

Tyler was abandoned by the Whig party, not only for his veto of the reissued Bank bill, but also by opposing redistribution sales of public lands. The Whigs and the Federalists were separated by 40 years. Both parties shared common political ideologies, interest groups and programs such as favoring the wealthy, a national bank and entrenched elites. The same idea seemed to pop up in both time periods. But, both parties did have differences as well. The Whigs appealed to the people as the "common man" of the Jacksonian era while the Federalists were referred to as the wealth and aristocracy of their time period.