

Jeffersonian vs hamiltonian ideals

[History](#), [American History](#)



Alexander Hamilton was the sculptor who chiseled the rough edges of America's economy away. He was the essential part in the plan to solve the massive war debt after the revolution. As a strong federalist, he had views that he and his party shared and were deemed fit for the refinement of America's economy. Thomas Jefferson was his eternal rival in terms of views. Along with James Madison, Jefferson was the polar opposite to Hamilton. The two past presidents seemed to be rigid with their views concerning political strategies the United States was taking in its early decades.

These men before their presidencies were rock solid anti-federalist. However, Jefferson and Madison had yet to experience the heaviness of the political tension they would be dealt with once elected into office. Hamiltonian views were applicable to the challenges Madison and Jefferson faced. They began to differ to the side of federalist as they realized that anti-federalism was not practical for the young America. The presidents of 1801-1817 made turnarounds during their presidencies once they saw contradicting actions became necessary for the country's welfare.

Thomas Jefferson made moderate changes in his presidential behavior, resembling Hamiltonian actions, for the benefit of America while James Madison saw federalist Hamiltonian views as a better fit to the country's government and acted on his changed views to a higher extent meaning that both presidents adapted within their respectful presidencies as they saw fit for the better benefit of the nation. Before the election of Jefferson in 1801 there was a clear line between federalist and antifederalist views that were defined by the lines of conflicts between Hamilton and Jefferson in the 1790s.

In 1791 Hamilton argued that a National Bank would be of great benefit to the economy and would be the keystone of his plan for economic refinement. Jefferson was against it in every aspect. (Document A) Thomas's logic was that the written constitution was not a wall of rules for the states but rather a wall to contain the federal government. Thomas perceived it as the confines the federal government had to work within; no more no less. Madison described it as a constitutional charter of constructs. (Document C)

Thomas debates that the powers left unaddressed by the constitution are given to the states; Thomas uses the tenth amendment as evidence for his argument against the national bank. (Document A) However, a national bank is set up anyways, but it expires once its twenty charter is up. Hamilton wanted a consistent neutrality for the United States to express internationally as part of his plan. Britain was a crucial trade partner with America and would be needed once peacetime had begun and routine trade could begin.

Jefferson and Madison believed isolation was the proper way to go; even in 1808 Jefferson passed the Embargo Act shutting all trade ports to other countries. (Document F) Jefferson saw trade as a source of conflict and a gateway to wars, which was not wrong. Alexander wanted neutrality to keep international trade so the economy would thrive. Jefferson was already in favor of complete isolation from any other country in any sort of manner. (Document D) Jefferson would argue against Hamilton over the topic of isolation versus neutrality.

Jefferson believed that international trade and tariffs were unnecessary to the nation however tariffs were strongly supported by the federalists.

(Document H) These taxes federalists would pass were planned to help pay for internal improvements. However, Madisonians/Jeffersonians believed that it is the state's responsibility to pay for the improvements. (Document I) Hamilton also supported the use of force when domestic rebellion is unable to be contained by laws alone. (Document B)

Jefferson and other anti-federalists viewed this as encroachment on state's liberties and thought the federal government was extending its boundaries. Even in 1798 Jefferson was seeing the federal government infringe on the states rights with the Sedition Acts. Madison states that it is the state's responsibility and right to interject when the federal government is crossing lines over any state's natural rights. (Document C) Many Jeffersonian editors were arrested for showing strong negativity to the US government in papers.

Jeffersonians saw the Sedition Acts as the catapult that launched the federal government over the wall that was set up to separate state power and federal power. The federalists, who were the creators of the law, used it as an advantage against Jeffersonians but set it to expire in 1801 in anticipation of the same act being used against them. Jeffersonians/Madisonians also sided with the French during their revolution in Europe and during their war against Britain. They saw the French as a future sister republic to relate to.

Hamiltonians/federalists were naturally siding with the British to keep up consistency with Hamilton's economic plan. Although, Jefferson in 1808 was thought to have passed the Embargo Act to help the French instead of practical reasons according to propaganda in the time period. (Document F)

Jefferson will come to contradict himself once his presidency follows through. Madison will come to act identical to Hamilton and will be known for the

turnaround he made. From 1801-1817 both Jefferson and Madison make changes to their normal agenda so they can adapt to their difficult situations as presidents.

In 1805 African pirates seized American ships in the Mediterranean and were only taking ransoms for their freedom. (Document E) . Jefferson's hand was forced and a five year war lasting until 1805 broke out. Jefferson wanted to be isolated from the world for proper growth but he was dragged into the war and forced to fight. Even though Jefferson tried to solve his problem with international trade with the Embargo Act of 1808 it was quickly adjusted with the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809 that reopened trade with all nations of Europe except France and Britain.

This was due to a massive public disapproval and merchants having excess goods that were normally shipped to England in their warehouses because of the ports shut down. (Document F) Jefferson showed little change from Democratic-republican views to practical Hamiltonian views when compared to his successor in the presidency: James Madison. John Adams admitted to Benjamin Waterhouse that his vote would go to Madison because he saw how the federal government was operating on a system he tried to enact during his years as president.

Madison showed federalist views and was in no way concealing them. James passed the tariff of 1816 as a protective tax for the textile industry in New England. This new tariff was looked down on by the anti-federalist community despite being passed by Madison. (Document H) Another big issue Madison had changed on was internal improvements. His supporters began to see the scale of the improvements and how states do not have the

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resources to build them. (Document I) The majority of Madison's terms was spent changing his perspective and that is why his views changed drastically.

Jefferson made leaps of change when responsibility struck while he was president; as did Madison when his whole viewpoint was altered to federalism and made practical actions to show his change in a much higher extent than Jefferson. Despite the wide gap between the two presidents and their rival, Hamilton, they made a bridge to compromise with themselves for the better of the young United States. Jefferson stepped out of his comfort zone because his views were not sufficient to run the government. Madison was already adapting to the position of president once the War of 1812 seemed inevitable. (Document G)

Jeffersonians were adapting closer federalistic views during Madison's presidency. (Document I) Jefferson was a leader who stuck to his basic principles as best as he could until his hand was forced while Madison adopted federalist views because a federalistic point of view was beneficial to the United States rather than anti-federalist views that impeded the nation's progress; lastly, Jefferson was hardly a changed anti-federalist when compared to the responses Madison made but they were both no longer the stone cold anti-federalists they once were.