

Hamilton and Madison's role in the first American political parties

[Politics](#)



The role Alexander Hamilton and James Madison played on the first political parties.

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were both very important political figures in the early years of our nation and their paths led them to two different political factions, The Federalist Party and the Democratic Republican Party, respectively. The years after the American Revolution were very hard on most Americans. The former colonies had huge debts to pay off from the war and the soldiers of the Continental Army, most of them farmers, returned home to find their farms in desperate need of renovation. With no money, increasing taxes and no way to pay off their debts, the farmers became desperate. They pleaded with the courts to give leniency on their debt re-payment, but their requests were hardly heard mostly unanswered. These factors led to Shay's Rebellion, an upheaval of the American farmers in Massachusetts against the debtors courts and local governments. Shay's Rebellion is important in American history because it convinced people that strong local governments were not able to effectively manage large national problems and that a strong national government could stabilize the currency, control and levy taxes and maintain public order.

The writing of the Constitution was a direct result of these beliefs. The Constitutional Convention commenced in May of 1787 and was represented by fifty-five men from twelve states (Rhode Island was missing.) The Constitution was written over the next five months and was sent to the states for ratification. This is the period of time in history when we first see two different " sides" emerge. There were two groups of people who came <https://assignbuster.com/hamilton-madisons-role-in-the-first-american-political-parties/>

out of the Convention, supporters of the Constitution (Federalists) and those who opposed it (Anti-Federalists.) The first faction, the Federalists were composed of many of the famed Founding Fathers, including Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. They believed in a strong central government with the power to control trade, tax the citizens, declare war and make treaties.

The Anti-Federalists were the opposition and believed in the power remaining with the states (Articles of Confederation) and were concerned that a federal government might ultimately lead to monarchy. During the initial stages of the Constitution, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison were all considered Federalists. Together, the three wrote the Federalist papers, which were essays designed to defend the beliefs of a centralized federal government and the ratification of the Constitution. While there ere many writings at the time and still many opposed to the Constitution, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify and “ The Constitution was now the law of the land. ” (Faragher, et. al, page 199) In the meantime, the Anti-Federalists had proposed a long list of amendments to the Constitution that would protect the rights of the people against the power of the central government. James Madison was tasked with editing the 200 proposals, which eventually became the Bill of Rights.

“ The Constitution was authored by the Federalists, but the Bill of Rights is the most important legal legacy of the Anti-Federalists. (Faragher, et. al, page 202) After the ratification, Alexander Hamilton continued to support the Federalists and became the first Secretary to the Treasury. Thomas Jefferson

was appointed as the Secretary of State. Under the presidency of George Washington, political differences between Hamilton and Jefferson began, including opposing beliefs in foreign policy. This became very clear when France and Great Britain broke out in war in 1793. Hamilton believed that a good relationship with Great Britain was extremely important since they were the United States' most important trading power.

Jefferson and supporter James Madison wanted international independence which would evolve through its own expansion in the western part of North America. This naturally meant good relations with France, since they were Britain's biggest enemy. Hamilton also believed in a Bank of the United States but was opposed by Jefferson and Madison. The faction sharing the beliefs of Jefferson and Madison became known as the Democratic Republican Party. " The framers of the constitution envisioned a one-party state in which partisan distinctions would be muted by patriotism and public virtue. (Faragher, et. al, page 211) However, even in our early days of nationhood, different factions of beliefs would ensue.

As Founding Fathers of our nation, both Hamilton and Madison played large roles in the evolution of political parties and many of the foundations of these parties still remain today. Bibliography John Mack Faragher, Mari Jo Buhle, Daniel Czitrom, Susan H. Armitage. Out of Many Sixth Edition, Volume 1, (2009) <http://www.foundingfathers.info>, The Federalist Papers Online <http://www.foundingfathers.info>, Founding Father Family Trees and Bios