

Washington's presidency – Ch. 10 “Launching the Ship of State

Overall main idea: *The U.S. federal government and its economy was strengthened under Washington's term, but was also divided by Hamilton's economic plans and the French Revolution.*

The U.S. was attempting to create a new government based on Republicanism despite a decade of anti-authority rebellion, one already failing attempt, and economic instability.

Growing Pains

Main idea: *The United States grew in population in the 1790s, spreading into the western territories with roughness and dubious loyalties.*

Population continued to grow by natural reproduction; the first census was in 1790 – almost 4 million Americans; 90% were rural, 10% urban; 95% were east of the Appalachian Mountains, 5% lived in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio areas

Philadelphia was the largest city, then New York

Life west of the Appalachians was crude, rough, restive and dubiously loyal; Spanish and British tried to lure American settlers from their government and break apart U.S. unity

Washington for President

Main idea: *Washington was unanimously elected president, to great fanfare, and promptly appointed his advising cabinet.*

Washington was tall, physically impressive, but quiet; he was balanced and governed by character rather than political brilliance

The U.S. temporary capital was in New York; on Washington's journey there for inauguration, there was lots of celebration; he was sworn in on April 30, 1789

The Constitution does not mention a cabinet, but Washington established one for advice:

Secretary of State (foreign affairs) – Thomas Jefferson

Secretary of Treasury (economics) – Alexander Hamilton

Secretary of War (now called “Defense”) – Henry Knox

The Bill of Rights

Main idea: *One of the first acts of the new U.S. government was to protect individual liberties through amendments known as the Bill of Rights.*

Many states ratified the Constitution only because they were promised an eventual Bill of Rights to protect individual freedoms; Congress made it one of its first priorities

Bill of Rights – the first ten amendments to the Constitution, written and pushed through Congress by James Madison; protects freedom of religion, speech, the press, the right to bear arms, trial by jury, assembly and petitions; also prohibits cruel and unusual punishment, unwarranted seizure of property, etc.

Ninth Amendment – declared that just because certain rights were listed, that didn't mean that the people didn't have other rights unnamed in the document

Tenth Amendment – declared that all rights not specifically delegated or prohibited are reserved for the states and the people; tried to reassure anti-Federalist states' rights advocates

Congress also created the first Federal court system and established the attorney general and the first Supreme Court justices

John Jay – first Chief Justice of Supreme Court; experienced diplomat

Hamilton Revives the Corpse of Public Credit

Main idea: *Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton tried to secure confidence in the Federal government and its economy by assuming all federal and state debts in full.*

Alexander Hamilton – young, economic genius; favored a strong central government and a weak Congress, like Britain; favored the aristocracy; played a strong role in the Washington administration, as if he were his Prime Minister

Hamilton's economic plan – favor the wealthy, who would lend money to the government and stabilize money and the government, which would eventually trickle down to common people

Part 1 of Hamilton's plan:

Assumption: The Federal government should assume the Revolutionary War debts of the national and state governments at full value; this would improve American credit and put more confidence in the

government; also would make the wealthy and the states more dependent on the Federal government (if someone owes you money, you're more likely to support them)

Some states who had not paid off their debts were happy with the assumption plan; others, like Virginia, who had already paid off much of theirs, were not as happy; to help convince them to agree, the southern states like Virginia were promised the new District of Columbia to be located in the South (between MD and VA)

Customs Duties and Excise Taxes

Main idea: *To pay off the large national debt, Hamilton helped pass new tariff and excise taxes.*

The new U.S. government could easily have avoided the debt from the war, but Hamilton wanted to restore Americans confidence in the new government and its stability; the national debt was now at \$75 million

Hamilton thought the national debt was a blessing, since it made people more dependent and supportive of the government

Tariff – tax on imported goods; biggest source of revenue to pay off the early debt

Revenue tariff – simply to raise revenue (income, money)

Protective tariff – raises the price of foreign goods in order to make Americans buy more American goods, thus protecting American businesses; the problem is it forces Americans to buy more expensive goods, since cheaper foreign goods are made artificially expensive

Part 2 of Hamilton's economic plan: Hamilton urges for both a revenue and a protective tariff (which would be higher), but the Congress passes only small revenue tariffs; the higher protective tariffs do not pass, since Congress is still dominated by agricultural interests

Part 3: Excise tax on certain domestic items, especially whiskey; backcountry farmers especially produced lots of whiskey, even using it as money in some cases; Hamilton also pushed for the tax as a way to "impose and secure" the power of the new government, "as a measure of social discipline"

Hamilton Battles Jefferson for a Bank

Main idea: *Hamilton's proposal for a National Bank was approved and passed by Washington and the Congress, despite its highly-debated constitutionality.*

Part 4 of Hamilton's economic plan: the Bank of the United States; the government would create a National Bank, a private bank owned mostly by the Federal government, in which the Fed government would deposit its money, stimulate lending and business, print money, and thus stabilize the economy

Strict construction of the Constitution – theory that the Constitution should be interpreted "strictly" and literally, and that the government may only do what the Constitution specifically authorizes for it to do; any other actions were reserved to the states

Thomas Jefferson and other states' rights advocates (esp. in the South) were strict constructionists, and argued that the Federal government had no right to create and maintain a National Bank; he argued that it would give the Federal government too much power at the expense of the states

Loose construction of the Constitution – theory that the Constitution should be interpreted "loosely" and broadly, and that the government may do anything not forbidden by the Constitution; it may do anything it deems "necessary and proper" to execute its listed actions, according to the "elastic clause"

Hamilton and other federalists (esp. in the North) were loose constructionists, and argued that the Federal government did have the right to create and maintain the National Bank, since it helped regulate commerce and stabilized the economy

Washington agreed with Hamilton and reluctantly signed the bill into law after Congress passed it

The (first) Bank of the United States – created in 1791, chartered for 20 years; stock was quickly bought up by people, but the biggest chunk was owned by the Federal government

Mutinuous Moonshiners in Pennsylvania

Main idea: *Washington and Hamilton sent thousands of troops to crush the Whiskey Rebellion, to show the power and control of the new Federal government.*

Whiskey Rebellion, 1794 – backcountry Pennsylvanian farmers were upset over the whiskey excise tax, so they revolted, tarred and feathered, and stopped whiskey tax collections; considered the early U.S. version of the Stamp Act

Washington (encouraged by Hamilton) led 13,000 troops recruited from several states to put down the rebellion, which was nonexistent by the time they got there; but the point was made—under the new Constitutional national government, insurrection like Shays's Rebellion would not be tolerated; the Federal government had power, was in control, and should be respected; if one had a grievance, they should do it through the proper governmental channels

Jefferson and other critics condemned the display of force as exaggerated and unnecessary

The Emergence of Political Parties

Main idea: *The first primitive political parties, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, developed as a result of Hamilton's economic policies and strengthening of the Federal government.*

Hamilton's plans strengthened the federal government and angered states' rights activists, especially anti-Federalists

There had been no formal political parties when Washington began; there were factions that fizzled out after a particular issue had ended, but parties seemed disloyal and divisive

Yet as disagreements grew and the press got a hold of them, parties began to emerge for and against Hamilton and the strong national government

The Impact of the French Revolution

Main idea: *The lengthy and bloody French Revolution made America political divisions wider, frightened aristocrats, and pulled America into the conflict.*

The two growing political parties in America were Hamilton's Federalists (NOT always the same as the Federalists that supported the Constitution) and Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans (NOT today's Democrats OR Republicans)

French Revolution – the rebellion of common French people against the French King, the Catholic Church, and the French aristocracy that would last 26 years eventually, go back and forth in power, and grow increasingly larger and bloodier; began in 1789

In the beginning, almost all Americans supported the French Revolution, as it was peaceful and reminiscent of the American Revolution; when it turned bloodier in 1792-1793, Federalists and American aristocrats were repelled and afraid of what might happen if it caught on in America; Jeffersonians mostly supported it, claiming it to be a small price to pay for liberty for common people

Eventually the U.S. would be pulled into the conflict

Overall main idea: *The U.S. federal government and its economy was strengthened under Washington's term, but was also divided by Hamilton's economic plans and the French Revolution.*

Washington, Adams, and Political Parties – Ch. 10 “Launching the Ship of State”

Overall main idea: *The French Revolutionary Wars pulled the U.S. into foreign affairs, eventually pushed Washington out of politics, and further divided Americans into defined political parties.*

Washington's Neutrality Proclamation

Main idea: *In response to the widening French Revolutionary Wars, Washington declared the United States to be neutral, setting the precedent for isolationism.*

Franco-American Alliance of 1778 was still in effect from the American Revolution

Jeffersonian Democratic-Republicans supported the French and wanted the U.S. to fight with them to honor the old alliance; Federalists were more pro-British and wanted to stay out of the war

Washington was brilliant at listening to all sides of the argument and then making a level-headed decision; he decided the U.S. was not ready for another war, and wanted to wait until the U.S. grew in population, wealth and stability

Neutrality Proclamation of 1793 – issued by Washington, declaring the U.S. neutral in the growing French Revolutionary Wars with Britain and other countries

Isolationism – the idea that a country should isolate itself from foreign affairs, specifically the U.S. isolating itself from Europe's problems

“Citizen Genet” – French ambassador who tried to generate support for the French among the Americans; angered Washington and was replaced

Embroidments in Britain

Main idea: *British actions against the United States during the French Revolutionary Wars caused Jeffersonians to cry for war, but Federalists were resistant to losing British trade.*

The British still occupied frontier forts in the north and northwest; they were trading with the Indians and encouraging attacks on U.S. soil

Miami Confederacy – confederacy of Indian tribes in the Old Northwest; led by Little Turtle; they defeated U.S. troops twice before losing at the Battle of Fallen Timbers

Battle of Fallen Timbers – Miami Indians were defeated by the U.S. and were not protected by their British allies; led to the signing of the Treaty of Greenville

Treaty of Greenville, 1795 – Miami Indians ceded much of present-day Indiana and Ohio to the U.S. in exchange for money, hunting rights, and recognition of their sovereignty

British ships were attacking American shipping and impressing (forcing into their service) American sailors

Jeffersonians cried for defense of the U.S., but Federalists were afraid of losing British trade, on which Hamilton's new economic plans depended

Jay's Treaty and Washington's Farewell

Main idea: *To resolve the problems with the British and prevent war, Washington signed Jay's Treaty, but received few concessions and enraged Jeffersonians into a growing party.*

Washington sent Chief Justice John Jay (the same one who negotiated the Treaty of Paris 1783) to negotiate a treaty with the British and avoid war

Jay's Treaty of 1794 – British promised (again) to evacuate northern forts, to pay damages for American ships; U.S. must still pay debts to British promised previously; Britain was granted "most favored nation" status for trade

Jay's Treaty was very unpopular with Jeffersonians, especially in the South, who were mostly responsible for debts to the British; Washington also lost popularity because of the treaty

Pinckney's Treaty of 1795 – treaty between the U.S. and Spain following Jay's Treaty, in which the Spanish gave the U.S. free navigation of the MS River and disputed territory north of Florida

Washington's Farewell Address – written by Washington and published in newspapers upon his resignation from the Presidency; he was tired of foreign problems and partisan arguing; he advised the U.S. to avoid long-term alliances and political parties

Washington, though often led by Hamilton, helped solidly establish the Federal government, the economy and trade, expanded the U.S. to the west, and avoided foreign wars; he successfully navigated the U.S. through its early experimental years; set the tradition of serving only two terms as President

John Adams Becomes President

Main idea: *John Adams was narrowly elected President, but faced a difficult task with an unpopular image, Washington's shadow, Hamilton's scheming, partisan politics and a quarrel with France.*

Though Hamilton was the leader of the Federalists, he was unpopular due to his financial policies, pro-British and aristocratic leanings

The election of 1796 was much more intense in partisan politics and campaigning

John Adams – Washington's Vice-President, defeated Thomas Jefferson to become the second president in 1796; Federalist, but more independent than Hamilton; like a middle ground between Washington and Hamilton; Jefferson became vice-president

Adams was not handsome; he was tactless, vain and unpopular with the masses; yet he was known to be virtuous, dutiful and of strong morals and education

Adams had to deal with being in Washington's shadow, plus Hamilton's scheming (the two hated each other), plus the French Revolutionary Wars situation

Unofficial Fighting with France

Main idea: *Anger over Jay's Treaty and the XYZ Affair led to the Quasi-War, and unofficial naval war with France in 1798-1800.*

The French were angry over Jay's Treaty, considering it a near alliance between the U.S. and Britain and a violation of the Franco-American Alliance of 1778; French warships began seizing American ships

XYZ Affair – Adams sent an envoy of Americans to negotiate with the French and avoid war; they met three French spokesmen known secretly as X, Y and Z, who demanded a loan of 32 million florins, plus a \$250,000 bribe just to speak with the French foreign minister, much less actually accomplishing anything

The Americans refused and returned home as stubborn heroes; anti-French sentiment increased in America and war seemed inevitable; the U.S. established a naval department, increased the size of its navy and authorized a new army and Marine Corps

The Quasi-War – undeclared naval war between the U.S. and France in 1798-1800; hundreds of ships were attacked on both sides, mostly in the West Indies

Adams Puts Patriotism Above Party

Main idea: *Despite his party's support and growing popularity because of the war, Adams pushed for and achieved*

peace with France in 1800.

France realized it did not really want a full war with the U.S., since its hands were already full; they then let it be known that a new U.S. envoy would be treated better

The Federalists and Adams were growing in popularity due to the war and their stubborn resistance to the French; he could have probably ridden it to a new term for himself and the Federalists, but he wanted peace, didn't think the U.S. was ready for it, and he disliked Hamilton (who was leading the charge for war)

Napoleon Bonaparte took control as dictator of France in 1800; he wanted to make peace with the U.S. to concentrate on his wars in Europe and his ideas of Louisiana empire

Convention of 1800 (a.k.a. Franco-American Accord of 1800) – ended the Quasi-War, avoided a full war with France, ended the Franco-American Alliance of 1778; U.S. must pay its own shipping damages

Adams regarded this as his greatest presidential achievement and wanted it put on his tombstone

The Federalist Witch Hunt

Main idea: *Federalists used anti-French and pro-war sentiments to pass the Alien and Sedition Acts, which divided Americans.*

Alien and Sedition Acts – intended by the Federalists to use anti-French and pro-war sentiments to quiet their Jeffersonian opponents

Alien Acts – made citizenship requirements more difficult; allowed the President to deport or imprison any “dangerous” foreigners; never really enforced

Sedition Acts – made it a crime to impede, criticize or falsely defame the government; in reality it broke the Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press rights of the Constitution; it was used to imprison and fine many Jeffersonian newspaper editors, who often published harsh criticisms of Adams and the Federalists

The Supreme Court was dominated by Federalists also and so did not oppose the constitutionality of the laws

Yet most Americans supported the laws due to the Quasi-War; Federalists swept the Congressional elections

The Virginia (Madison) and Kentucky (Jefferson) Resolutions

Main idea: *In response to the Alien and Sedition Acts, Jefferson and Madison wrote resolutions condemning them and arguing for a “compact theory” of the union and states’ rights.*

The Jeffersonians were afraid of losing personal liberties, their party, and even the entire government to the Federalists

Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions – Jefferson wrote an anonymous resolution condemning the Alien and Sedition Acts that was passed by the Kentucky legislature; Madison wrote one for the Virginia legislature; both stressed compact theory, nullification, and states’ rights

Compact theory – the belief that the states had created the union and federal government and entered into a “compact” (contract, agreement) with it; if the federal government broke that compact, the state had the right to interpose itself and nullify (refuse to honor or accept) unconstitutional laws

None of the other Jeffersonian or southern states would adopt the resolutions; Federalist states condemned them

Yet the point was made to rally support against the Federalists; it also set the stage for future states’ rights arguments, especially secession

Federalists argued that only the courts, as the agent of the people in general, could nullify laws, not states

Federalists Versus Democratic-Republicans

Main idea: *The presidential campaign of 1800 more sharply defined the differences between the Federalists and the Thomas Jefferson-led Democratic-Republicans.*

*Differences between Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans

Alexander Hamilton vs. Thomas Jefferson was the defining archetype of early American politics

Thomas Jefferson – timid, relaxed, but master organizer and leader; eastern Virginia aristocratic planter and slave-owner, but champion of the common people and the spreading of democracy along with education; believed that the U.S. should be a republic of educated, independent, land-owning citizen farmers; thought slavery helped this, since it gave planters a large workforce that would normally be filled by white farmers working for little wages; a man of many seeming contradictions, so he is sometimes called the “American Sphinx”

The U.S. was threatened with being broken apart by political parties after only twenty years of independence

Overall main idea: *The French Revolutionary Wars pulled the U.S. into foreign affairs, eventually pushed Washington out of politics, and further divided Americans into defined political parties.*