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After the Revolutionary War was over, Americans no-longer had a single major item around which everyone could rally. Many compromises were required as the people tried to resolve their differences. One compromise involved the location of the central government. The Federalists agreed to move the capital to an area near the Potomac River. That place would first be called Washington City and is known now as the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.). In this image we see a picture of The President's House (or the Executive Mansion as it was first called). This photo was taken of the home's northwest facade sometime between 1862-1868 (when issues that divided the nation caused a war between the states). Photo by Bell & Bro.; online via the Library of Congress.

The new U.S. federal government, which began in 1789, had two very important leaders. The first one was the President, George Washington. He was unanimously elected and served two terms as President. The second was the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton wanted an economic policy that would enable the United States to become stronger as a nation. Some of Hamilton's proposals were:

- The federal government would pay the debts from the Revolutionary War;
- The national government would take over the state's debts; and
- The country would have a national bank that would issue bank notes and collect taxes.

Hamilton also wanted Congress to pass higher tariffs on imported goods which, he believed, would result in Americans making and buying goods at home instead of buying from overseas.

During this time, there were two political parties which arose as a result of disagreements about what Hamilton was proposing:

- The Federalists (men who thought like Hamilton) wanted a strong central government that would promote trade and industry. The majority of the men who were Federalists were from New England.
- The Democratic-Republicans were led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. They opposed Hamilton's proposals.

South Carolina was also very divided in the opinions of its people:

- The Lowcountry elite were in favor of the Federalists because it was better for their businesses.
- The Upcountry supported the Democratic-Republicans because Jefferson and Madison supported small farmers and shopkeepers rather than manufacturing.

However, most people in South Carolina were united on one major issue. They wanted the federal government to take over the state's debts because much of the Revolutionary War had been fought in the state (leading to a great deal of debt). Even so, the Democratic-Republicans opposed the federal government taking over the debt.

A compromise was reached when:

- The Federalists agreed to move the Capital of the nation to the banks of the Potomac River; and
- The Democratic-Republicans agreed to assume the state debts.

This compromise was very similar to what had happened in South Carolina when the capital was moved to Columbia from Charleston.

The establishment of a national bank was the cause of a massive disagreement:

- Democratic-Republicans believed the Constitution should be interpreted strictly (meaning that Congress could not create a national bank).
- Federalists believed that Congress had the right to make all laws that were needed. They believed a national bank was needed in order for the nation to be able to tax and control commerce. In the Constitution, the national government has the right to tax and control commerce.

President Washington agreed with the Federalists and signed into law a bill creating the First National Bank.

The Democratic-Republicans did not want a bigger national government. Instead, they wanted to balance the federal power with states' rights. They advocated for a republic of small farmers and shopkeepers rather than manufacturing, which meant they were against the protective tariff recommended by Hamilton.

The protective tariff bill did not pass.

The next disagreement between the two groups was over foreign policy. The French Revolution began in 1789. Many believe it was the American Revolution, which the French helped the Americans to win, that directly influenced the French Revolution.

Democratic-Republicans supported the French people trying to overthrow their King, while Federalists were horrified at the bloodshed which resulted in the death of the King (Louis XVI), Queen (Marie Antoinette) and tens of thousands of other individuals.

When the French declared war on Britain, the Federalists sided with the British because they wanted to secure more trade. President George Washington, however, decided that the United States needed to stay out of that war and issued a Proclamation of Neutrality in the [Napoleonic Wars](#).

In 1797, the newly elected President John Adams sent South Carolinian Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Marshall and Elbridge Gerry to negotiate peace with France. The men met with three representatives of the French government because the French Foreign Minister minister was unavailable to meet with the men.

The three French representatives asked for a bribe before the negotiations could begin. Pinckney became angry at this and refused. This became known as the [X, Y, Z affair](#).

This situation also helped bring the two different political parties into conflict. The result was:

- The Federalists prepared for war; and
- The Democratic-Republicans vilified President John Adams in their party newspapers.

The Federalists, in Congress, passed the Alien and Sedition Acts which limited the growth of the Democratic-Republican Party and silenced its newspapers. This resulted in several newspaper publishers being jailed, including Thomas Cooper (after whom the libraries at the University of South Carolina and Clemson are named).

Democratic-Republicans protested this attack on the freedom of the press. This caused Jefferson and Madison to write the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, stating that states have the right to nullify an act of Congress if they find that law to be unconstitutional. A specific target was the Alien and Sedition Acts.

These resolutions later became a foundation of the states' rights doctrine, espoused by people like John C. Calhoun and put into practice first in the Nullification Controversy and later in secession.

It was this controversy, over the Alien and Sedition Acts, which led to the election of [Thomas Jefferson](#) as President in 1800.

The Napoleonic Wars continued, and Americans traded with both the British and the French. At the time, however, the British practiced impressment, which means they were taking men by force and requiring them to work on British navy ships.

Captured American sailors were forced to work for the British because the British claimed the sailors were still British citizens. Needless to say, this became a serious grievance between the two countries.

As a result of the impressment issue, Congress passed the Embargo Act which stopped trade between America and both Britain and France. This act had serious consequences, particularly for New England because of the area's shipping industry. As New England was primarily a Federalist region, Federalists were against the Embargo Act and later also opposed the [War of 1812](#).

The Democratic-Republicans who lived in the West believed the British encouraged the Native Americans to attack American settlers. People in South Carolina became very upset when a British ship fired on an American ship. There were protest meetings held all over the state.

In 1810, [John C. Calhoun](#)—a War Hawk—was elected to Congress, from South Carolina, and urged Congress to declare war on Great Britain. South Carolina strongly supported going to war with Britain.

In 1812, the United States did declare war on Great Britain and invaded Canada. The American army, in Canada, was defeated.

Two years later, in 1814, the British army attacked Washington, DC. The invaders burned the Capitol and the President's House. Later, the President's House became known as the "White House," due to the paint that was used to cover damage from the 1814 fire. This was also the time frame, during the "War of 1812," when Francis Scott Key wrote the "[Star Spangled Banner](#)."

There was no exchange of land, from America to Britain, when a treaty was finally signed to end the war. It did, however, lead to a new surge of nationalism. And:

- The Federalist Party died as a result of its members opposing the war; and
- The Democratic-Republicans, including [John C. Calhoun](#), began to support Federalist policies (including a protective tariff and a national bank).

Footnotes:

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2) History.com Staff, Alexander Hamilton, History.com, Jul/29/2015, Jul/29/2015, <http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/alexander-hamilton>

3) Shmoop Editorial Team, Thomas Jefferson: And James Madison, Shmoop.com. , Dec/31/1969, Jul/30/2015, <http://www.shmoop.com/thomas-jefferson/madison.html>

4) Bos, Carole D, Marie Antoinette - THE FRENCH REVOLUTION , Awesomestories, Feb/27/2015, Jul/30/2015,

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- 9) Harrison, Valerie; Jones, Cathy, plus others , Grade 8 Support Document, SC Dept of Education, Jul/30/2015, Jul/30/2015, <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/documents/Grade8SupportDocument.pdf>
- 10) History.com Staff, John C. Calhoun, History.com, Jul/30/2015, Jul/30/2015, <http://www.history.com/topics/john-c-calhoun>

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Issues-that-Divide-a-Nation-South-Carolina-History>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Issues-that-Divide-a-Nation-South-Carolina-History>

Media Stream



White House during the U.S. Civil War

Photo by Bell & Bro, Washington, D.C. taken between 1862-1868. Online via the Library of Congress reproduction number LC-DIG-ppmsca-09381 (digital file from original item) LC-USZ62-136715 (b&w film copy neg. Public Domain.

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Robespierre - Terrorist Leader During the French Revolution

Clip from "[Terror! Robespierre and the French Revolution](#)" - originally broadcast July 11, 2009, on BBC Two - online, courtesy BBC WorldWide Channel at YouTube. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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