

**Alexander Hamilton: National Defense,
Commerce, and the Issue of Slavery**

Teaching Unit

For 10th through 12th grades

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Abstract.....

United States History I

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Abstract

A member of the First Continental Congress, a driving force behind the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, and a co-author of the Federalist papers, Alexander Hamilton was instrumental in the creation of American democracy. None of the Founding Fathers came from such unpromising origins: three years before the American Revolution, Hamilton was an illegitimate orphan working in the Virgin Islands as a merchant's clerk. Few achieved as much as he did in such a compact career. Hamilton held his first important public office (colonel on George Washington's staff) when he was 20 years old and retired from his last one (Inspector General of the army) when he was 43. None suffered such a spectacular death shot in a duel by the Vice President of the United States. Hamilton overcame huge odds, left behind ideas and institutions that have lasted for centuries, and never quite escaped the shadows of his past.

This unit explores Alexander Hamilton in his impressionable years, when he was living and working in the West Indies, notably St. Croix. Surrounded by slavery and commerce, Hamilton grew up as an abolitionist who would seek to free slaves as early as the American Revolution in order to seek manpower to help in the war effort and to undermine the Southern slave-based economic order. An economic genius, Alexander Hamilton would push for the establishment of credit and a national bank, the encouragement of manufacturers, the use of protective tariffs, and the creation of an expandable standing army and navy. He recognized the need for the establishment of a national identity and thought these measures necessary for America to be able to defend its rights and honor internationally while protecting its citizens' liberties internally.

In these eight lesson plans, students will read several editorials, personal accounts, and factual outlines, so they may ably understand how Alexander Hamilton came to such conclusions. They will recognize the beginnings of "civil rights" and "economic values" which Hamilton brought forth in helping to create the greatest democracy and economy the world has ever witnessed.

Main Points of the Unit

Big Questions:

1. How might growing up in St. Croix affect Hamilton's values and ideas of Slavery and Commerce?
2. Why was the Hurricane of 1772 so important to Hamilton? What did he see that made him write such a letter to his father and why is this letter significant?
3. How did these early experiences help shape critical facets of Hamilton's later thinking?
4. How did Hamilton's tenure as a bookkeeper, and briefly as manager, at Cruger and Beckman expose him to the intricacies of the business world? What did these experiences cultivate?
5. What early experiences led Hamilton to become an abolitionist? Why did Hamilton seek to free slaves as early as the American Revolution?
6. How did Hamilton's military knowledge reinforce his belief in the necessity of effective government?

7. What did Hamilton’s “take” on slavery, and how did it affect his economic ideas and overall policy concepts about our new government?
8. What was Alexander Hamilton’s legacy and was he forgotten? According to his writings, what was his vision of a national defense?

Best Practices

Best practices are teaching strategies that are interactive and involve high-level thinking skills. The appropriate Best Practices vary widely with teacher strengths, school environment, student population, and experience. But all student populations will benefit from experience and strategies’ showing that U.S. history is much more than lectures, and more than a survey of facts and dates. This unit, within its individual lessons, includes the following examples of Best Practice teaching strategies:

- Read visual documents.
- Jigsaw groups
- Simulation
- Research
- Writing
- Brainstorming and Debate

Lesson Summary

Lesson 1. Hamilton and Jefferson

Students will break up into two groups and read the first article; “Alexander Hamilton a Forgotten Forefather?” and Part 3 of the article “Alexander Hamilton and Slavery”. One group will discuss Jefferson and the other Hamilton. Students will then compare Thomas Jefferson with Alexander Hamilton in jigsaw groups.

Lesson 2. The Island of St. Croix and the Hurricane of August 31, 1772

Students will read the article and letter that Alexander Hamilton wrote to his father after the hurricane in St. Croix. They will continue to read about the Island of St. Croix and will write their own editorials about the island. How was the island and its inhabitants affected, by government, slavery and the hurricane, and what lessons might Alexander Hamilton have taken from his experiences on this island?

Lesson 3. Alexander Hamilton – The Early Years

Students will read for homework the next article, which covers the “shaping” of Alexander Hamilton involving his life in St. Croix and his military years. Students will write a one-page essay, focusing on what they believe helped make Alexander Hamilton the Federalist, abolitionist, and ardent business minded politician he would become.

Lesson 4. Alexander Hamilton and Slavery

Students will read in class the article “Alexander Hamilton and Slavery” and will pair up to create a Venn diagram based on the reading. After all students have completed their diagram, each pair will participate in a discussion about them.

Lesson 5. The Economics of Slavery

Students will look over “The Economics of Slavery” outline and will debate the issues in a “minute around”. *(Desks are placed in a circle and each student is timed for a one-minute argument, which is then repeated).

Lesson 6. Slavery and the Law in Virginia

Students will look at the chart and timeline of Slavery and the law in Virginia. Students will write a long essay on how and why they think the laws changed for worse or for better.

Lesson 7. Slavery Research: Focus Question Worksheet

Students will research the questions on slavery and fill in all the answers in the boxes which will be discussed in jigsaw groups.

Lesson 8. Alexander Hamilton’s Legacy

What was Hamilton’s legacy? Students will read the introduction on the Federalist Papers, and Federalist Paper Numbers 1, 6, and 8. Students will read between the lines and decipher Hamilton’s vision on a secure United States. Students will then answer the six questions in short essay.

1. What were some of Alexander Hamilton’s main points in his essays?
2. What was his position on a national defense and are they different or similar to our current leaders?
3. How would he have reacted to the current crisis in our world today?
4. What seems to be Hamilton’s main argument for ratification of the Constitution?
5. Would your ideas conflict with his on these issues, and if so, how?
6. Would your ideas conflict with his on the issue of economics, slavery, and ratification of the Constitution?

Assessment Overview

The teacher may assess students’ understanding of Alexander Hamilton regarding slavery issues and economic strategies before and during the colonial period. Students will also assess their own and others’ work in the debates and diagrams. The teacher may assess student essays and presentations, and the observations of active participants and listeners. The teacher will also assess student written responses and research.

N.J. State Standards

6.3-12, 6.4-13, 6.6-11-12, 6.1-10, 6.6-15

Objectives

Content objectives

- Define Slavery and the economics of slavery.
- Analyze Alexander Hamilton’s early years in the West Indies
- Analyze the connections between Hamilton’s early and late thoughts about slavery, society, and economy.
- Find examples of slavery and the “economics of slavery” in the West Indies and colonial America.
- Compare and contrast the reactions of Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and others on the issues of economics and slavery in regard to Federalism, Anti-Federalism, and the drafting of the constitution.

Skill objectives

- Primary source analysis
- Developing perspective and point of view
- Inference skills
- Presentation skills

Materials

- Handouts, included and described in each lesson.
- Websites including images and articles.
- Optional reading on Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and the colonial economy
- Photos of Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers, the island of St. Croix, Slavery, etc. to be gathered by the teacher.
- Possible PowerPoint presentation, or video

“Alexander Hamilton a Forgotten Forefather?”

Hamilton's youth was filled with anomalies. The future American was a native West Indian, born on the British island of Nevis and raised on the Danish Island of St. Croix. His father, James Hamilton, was Scottish; his mother, Rachel Faucett, was of Huguenot ancestry. They were not married. The islands' sugar industry, worked by slaves, produced enormous wealth, which Hamilton viewed only at a distance, from his lowly position as a clerk. In 1772 benefactors sent him to New York to be educated. There, his life took a dramatic turn.



Alexander Hamilton was born on Nevis and raised on St. Croix (Sta. Cruz on this map) in the Caribbean -- islands made rich by sugar and slaves.

Alexander Hamilton was born in 1755 in the British West Indies and mortally wounded in a duel with Aaron Burr on July 11, 1804, in Weehawken, New Jersey. The trajectory of his life over those 49 years included remarkable accomplishments. He served in the Revolutionary army as lieutenant-colonel and aide to George Washington, fought tirelessly for ratification of the Constitution, and played a pivotal role in defining the governmental mechanisms for managing the national economy. Yet Hamilton's image in the American consciousness, the memory that the public retains of him, remains cloudy and vaguely negative.

Despite his formidable contributions to the shaping of the republic, despite the prophetic accuracy of his vision of the United States as a global power, Hamilton never quite captured the hearts of Americans in the way that Jefferson and Lincoln were able to. Technically, he must be counted in the pantheon of founding fathers -- it is for this reason that a seven-foot statue of Hamilton graces the Capitol Rotunda. But, while biographers have accorded him considerable shelf space, Hamilton remains largely unknown to many of the "regular people" who live in a society and political culture that he was instrumental in creating.

As a general principle, the most revered public figures are those who, whatever their actions may have been, strike a responsive emotional chord in their countrymen. The major determinative factor in attaining such "revered status" is the perception that the figure's beliefs and ideals reflect the best and noblest aspects of the culture and of the individual. The figure's emotional

appeal rests largely on his or her identification -- or perceived identification -- with the personal hopes, fears, and aspirations of the populace.

This proposition helps to explain the long-term fading of Hamilton from the American consciousness. Hamilton's image has tended to emphasize not the military aspects of his career, nor his contributions to the Constitution, but his rather bureaucratic role as economic wizard, his belief in the necessity of powerful government, and his deeply rooted mistrust of the people. In other words, the potentially romantic side of Hamilton's character has given way to the vaguely unsettling and even contemptuous side. At times, it should be said; his economic expertise and governmental philosophy have been widely admired and praised -- at least at an intellectual level. But at the emotional level, the long-term trend has seen a steady descent in Hamilton's prestige in the eyes of the American public.

Considering Hamilton in relation to Thomas Jefferson is instructive. During their lives, the two men engaged each other in a titanic struggle over the form of the United States government and its relationship to society. In a directly parallel fashion, the public images of the two men also have been in perpetual contention. Yet while Hamilton and the Federalists were able to seize the reins of power in the 1790s and institute many of their programs, it is Jefferson who, in the long run, captured the imagination and love of the American people.

A few juxtapositions may suggest the reasons underlying Jefferson's superior popular appeal. Hamilton championed strong government; Jefferson championed the individual. Hamilton emphasized self-interest as the prime mover of human affairs; Jefferson exalted the ability of humankind to realize virtuous ideals. Hamilton issued the Report on Manufactures; Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence. Hamilton concerned himself with the intricacies of finance and federal power; Jefferson founded the University of Virginia and invented the dumbwaiter.

Perhaps the fate of Hamilton's reputation is unfair; perhaps public memory is unfair in its nature. After all, Hamilton, unlike Jefferson, held no slaves and was a staunch opponent of the institution. He drafted the call for a Constitutional Convention, and when the document appeared headed for defeat, he fought indefatigably for its passage. His vision of the United States as a global power stabilized by capitalism proved prophetic. Hamilton as much as Jefferson lived his life for his country. Yet his birthday goes uncelebrated; his visage does not peer out from Mt. Rushmore; his name is not evoked in soaring political oratory; and his accomplishments are sung mainly by academics, not by the people.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ham/hamilton.html>

The Hurricane of August 31, 1772

Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, aide-de-camp to General George Washington during the Revolutionary War, and recipient of a fatal bullet in a duel with Aaron Burr, was fifteen years old and living in the town of Christiansted, St. Croix, when the great hurricane of August 31, 1772, struck the island of St. Croix. From Hamilton's description, the eye of this storm passed directly over Christiansted. The following is excerpted from a letter written by Hamilton to his father on September 6, 1772.

Honored Sir,

I take up my pen, just to give you an imperfect account of one of the most dreadful hurricanes that memory or any records whatever can trace, which happened here on the 31st ultimo at night. It began about dusk, at north, and raged very violently till ten o'clock. Then ensued a sudden and unexpected interval which lasted about an hour. Meanwhile the wind was shifting round to the southwest point, from whence it returned with redoubled fury and continued till nearly three in the morning. Good God! What horror and destruction - it's impossible for me to describe - or you to form any idea of it. It seemed as if a total dissolution of nature was taking place. The roaring of the sea and wind - fiery meteors flying about in the air - the prodigious glare of almost perpetual lightning - the crash of falling houses - and the ear-piercing shrieks of the distressed were sufficient to strike astonishment into Angels. A great part of the buildings throughout the island are leveled to the ground - almost all the rest very much shattered - several persons killed and numbers utterly ruined - whole families wandering about the streets, unknowing where to find a place of shelter - the sick exposed to the keenness of water and air - without a bed to lie upon - or a dry covering to their bodies - and our harbors entirely bare. In a word, misery, in its most hideous shapes, spread over the whole face of the country....

In: "The Virgin Islands Our New Possessions and the British Virgin Islands" by Theodoor De Booy and John T. Faris, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1918. Pp. 205-206. Library Call Number C/hc100v81 B.

A Look at St. Croix

Not long after Danish settlements and plantations began dotting the island, St. Croix's population approached 10,000--9,000 of them enslaved Africans most of whom worked from dawn until dark, with two hours off for a meal, six days a week. As early as 1747, a section of Christiansted, the capital that the Danes constructed upon purchasing the island was set aside for free blacks. Of the males, most worked as artisans (which is how they had purchased their freedom in the first place) and many served in the black militia established by the island's government. (The militia was disbanded in December 1852, the day after it was called out to disperse poor laborers protesting the banning of traditional festivities and opened fire, killing three and wounding six.) Then called Neger Gotted, the area is today called Free Gut and lies in a hilly two-square-block section at the southern end of Christiansted.

Between 1791 and 1815, the free black population in the town more than doubled, from 775 to 1,764, but although they served a critical function in a society that had little in the way of a white working or lower middle class, not until 1834 were free blacks granted full equality with whites. Central to their improved status and to the improving conditions (including compulsory education for enslaved children) for their still-enslaved brethren were Peter von Scholten, the Danish governor general from 1827 to 1848, and his influential, free mixed-race mistress, Anna Heegaard. When, in July 1848, 5,000 slaves marched under the leadership of Moses “Buddhoe” Gottlieb against Fort Frederik in Frederiksted to demand their freedom--plundering estates and destroying official slave whipping posts on the way--von Scholten responded with a declaration of emancipation applicable throughout the Virgin Islands. (The demonstration was provoked by the July 1847 declaration by King Christian VII abolishing slavery immediately for children but imposing a 12-year delay for adult emancipation.) Unable to revoke the declaration without provoking an island wide conflict, the Danish king confirmed von Scholten's proclamation--and then promptly dismissed him from office and stripped him of his pension. Gottlieb fared no better after assisting the authorities in restoring order, he was tried and exiled to Trinidad. Of greater historical significance than the individual fates of von Scholten and Gottlieb, St. Croix's sugar plantation economy promptly collapsed, being nonviable without enslaved labor.

Hamilton's Background

Caribbean Son

The island of Nevis in the Caribbean is a volcanic cone approximately five miles in diameter and 1,300 miles away from New York City. Today, its primary tourist attraction (perhaps its only tourist attraction) is the house in Charles Town where Alexander Hamilton was born. His parents were James Hamilton, an unsuccessful Scotch businessman, and Rachel Fawcett Lavien, who was still married to another man when Alexander was born (she was divorced from John Lavien in 1758). Although she and James Hamilton started a family together, they never married.

In 1765, shortly after the family moved to the island of St. Croix, James Hamilton, who had never succeeded in his various business ventures, abandoned Rachel and the two boys, Alexander, and James. Rachel opened a small shop in the main town, James was apprenticed to a carpenter, and Alexander, then 11 years old, took work as a clerk at the trading post of Cruger and Beckman. The main export of St. Croix currently was sugar, the main labor force slaves.

These early experiences helped shape critical facets of Hamilton's later thinking. Having spent his entire youth outside the American colonies (he moved to New York at the age of seventeen), Hamilton never developed the kind of state or regional loyalty that characterized so many of his colleagues. He could envision the United States as a single entity in which partisan regional interests would be subsumed to the health and stability of the whole.

At the same time, Hamilton witnessed the brutal system of slavery which drove the economy of St. Croix. Slave rebellions occasionally erupted, occasionally resulting in deaths of whites, but they were always crushed, the slaves forced back into lives of unremitting and unrewarded toil. As an adult, Hamilton consistently opposed slavery, served as an officer of the New York Manumission Society, and tended to hold the southern planter class in low regard. It should be noted, however, that, as a true pragmatist, he was willing to compromise on issues of slavery in the interests of strengthening the union. The South's slave-based economy, after all, provided the raw materials that drove the economic engines of the North, which Hamilton regarded as the essential foundation for the country.

Meanwhile, Hamilton's tenure as a bookkeeper, and briefly as manager, at Cruger and Beckman exposed him to the intricacies of business world and fostered in him an appreciation of the importance of trade and of precise economic reasoning. Still, the knowledge he gained in the position did not come close to satisfying his desire for a life of adventure beyond the shores of St. Croix. In a 1769 letter to his friend Edward Stevens, Hamilton wrote, "...I mean to prepare the way for futurity, I'm no Philosopher you see and may be justly said to Build Castles in the Air, my Folly makes me ashamed and beg you'll conceal it, yet Neddy we have seen such schemes successful when the Projector is Constant. I shall conclude saying I wish there was a war" [sic].

In the short term, the destruction that Hamilton saw was not a war but a devastating hurricane that hit St. Croix in August 1772. In a letter to his father describing the storm, the 17-year-old Hamilton reflected on human nature and the apparent wrath of God: "Where now, oh! vile worm, is all thy boasted fortitude and resolution? What is become of thy arrogance and self-

sufficiency?" This critical view of humankind did not, however, efface the compassion that led him to implore all those who "revel in affluence, [to] see the afflictions of humanity, and bestow your superfluity to ease them." Perhaps unfortunately for Hamilton, it was the former quality of mind, the suspicion of human nature that critics and enemies emphasized in painting his character.

At the time, the letter greatly impressed the Presbyterian clergyman of St. Croix, Hugh Knox, who managed to have it printed in the island newspaper. The printing secured Hamilton's reputation as a youth of good character and formidable intellectual ability who needed to transcend the confines of St. Croix. Accordingly, Knox, Nicholas Cruger, and a few other friends took up a collection to send Hamilton to the United States for a college education. They hoped that he might return to St. Croix some day, but the American Revolution and subsequent struggles in creating the American republic involved Hamilton in a much different course of history.

Revolutionary Soldier

When he arrived in New York toward the end of 1772, Hamilton still sympathized with the British, and could not fully appreciate the demands of American patriots. However, the friends of Hugh Knox with whom Hamilton stayed in both New York and New Jersey were Presbyterians loyal to the colonial cause, and as a student at King's College (later Columbia), Hamilton read the revolutionary works of James Otis, John Adams and John Dickinson. His first public act of resistance to Britain was a 1774 speech in the Fields Park of New York City, in which he defended the Boston Tea Party and called for democratically chosen delegates to the First Continental Congress.

Yet Hamilton did not yet consider himself a revolutionary. His prescription for resolving the troubles that beset both the colonies and Britain was to bind the two closers together, but on an equal footing that assured the God-given rights of all men, including those of personal and economic liberty. The British Empire, in his eyes, was one which could include the United States and England as equal partners. As events would prove, the British Parliament and King remained unwilling to cede any significant degree of power. The shots fired at Lexington demonstrated that there was to be no peaceful resolution to the imperial crisis.

Very early into the actual fighting with Britain, Hamilton joined the New York militia and in 1775 accepted an appointment as captain of the New York Artillery Company. After approximately two years of combat, while the outcome of the war remained entirely uncertain, Commander-in-Chief George Washington invited Hamilton to become his aide-de-camp, with the rank of lieutenant colonel. This appointment, and the access it brought to the corps of gentlemanly soldiers and aristocrats in the Washington circle, set the stage for Hamilton's future career in the Washington and Adams administrations. He was also increasingly respected by New York political leaders who admired his eloquence and valued his proximity to Washington and detailed knowledge of the course of the war.

Most importantly, this knowledge reinforced Hamilton's belief in the necessity of effective government. As aide to Washington, he became acutely aware of the economic and political troubles that were hindering the American army's ability to wage war and was especially critical

of the Continental Congress's inefficiency in managing the military. Political caprice and factionalism, inertia and ignorance, a tendency to defer to the states, seemed to sap Congress of the authority necessary to win the war. "Their conduct," he wrote, "with respect to the army especially is feeble, indecisive, and improvident." In his later career, these were the very qualities Hamilton would seek to expunge from government.

One proposal Hamilton supported, as the British pressed the war in the South, was for the American Army to enlist slaves there as they had occasionally done in the North. But the idea struck to the heart of many whites' fears of black rebellion. Predictably, the proposal never managed to overcome the strenuous objections of Southern legislatures, but it reveals the striking distance between Hamilton and Jefferson on the question of slavery. While Jefferson continued to own slaves and to suspect that blacks were inferior to whites, Hamilton wrote that "the contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor in experience" and believed that "their natural faculties are as good as ours." (See Moulton, *The Reach of Jefferson*, for more on Jefferson's views on race and slavery).

As early as 1779 a cloud appeared on the horizon of Hamilton's life which suggested the acrimony of the American political climate, and the degree to which war had raised the stakes of all political debate. A rumor had been started to the effect that Hamilton had said "it was high time for the people to rise, join General Washington, and turn Congress out of doors." Although the charge was false, and Hamilton never believed in establishing a military dictatorship, as the rumor implied, he recognized its potential to wreck his career. Nothing less than treason was involved.

Hamilton eventually traced the story to a Massachusetts parson, William Gordon, who refused to tell the young lieutenant colonel his source, fearing that a duel would result. After an exchange of words in which Hamilton excoriated the parson, Gordon wrote to Washington himself, asking for an apology from Hamilton in return for revealing to Washington the rumor's source. Washington declined the whole offer and replied that the army had more important business to attend to than rumor-mongering.

This episode represents an early instance of the sort of calumny that Hamilton would experience as he entered more fully into the political arena and the public eye. It taught him the importance of caution in dealing with the civilian government; in the political debates of the early republic, he sought always to be forthright and aggressive in promoting his views, but never precipitate.

During the war years, nonetheless, Hamilton acquired a wide reputation as a brave soldier, a gentleman of refined sentiments, a writer and rhetorician of redoubtable talent, and a man of supreme confidence who seemed to have a solution for every problem and to be perfectly willing to distinguish his own views from his superiors, including Washington. The respect that he commanded in St. Croix as an industrious and intelligent clerk found its echo -- a much more significant echo -- in his success as an American soldier.

As fate would have it, the momentum that Hamilton's career received as a result of his wartime reputation ultimately plunged him into the vicious storm of politics in the 1780s and 90s. He would become a lightning rod for the attacks of Anti-federalists who alleged, among other things, that his economic plan for the United States entailed a conspiracy to return the country to

monarchy. The damage done to his reputation during the years of the early Republic would never be fully repaired.

Hamilton's aversion to warfare, expressed in a 1777 letter to an unidentified friend, seems a fitting though ironic preview of the battles to come. "Every finer feeling of a delicate mind," he wrote, "revolts from the idea of shedding human blood and multiplying the common evil of life by the artificial methods incident to war. Were it not for the evident necessity and in defense of all that is valuable in society, I could never be reconciled to a military character..." (sic). Within a decade, the war would be won and the political bloodletting would begin.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ham/hamilton.html>

Hamilton and Slavery

(Part 1)

Although the front around New York was quiet and, in Hamilton's opinion, seemed likely to remain so, he looked for serious trouble in the southern states, where there were few regulars and the militia a doubtful quantity. In March 1779, he predicted that the British, having bruised their heads against the stone wall of the Northern Army, would turn their attention to the South and attempt to open another--and more promising--theater of war. Hamilton's surmise proved correct: Sir Henry Clinton was already laying plans for a full-scale invasion of the southern states, where he hoped to find the soft underbelly of the rebellion.

When the war in the South took an unexpected turn against the Americans, the problem of manpower became acute in the American army. Few troops could be spared from the Continental Army for the southern theater, yet the militia of the invaded states was weak and divided in its loyalties. How, therefore, Americans asked themselves, could Lord Cornwallis, the "British Hannibal," be prevented from severing the southern states from the union?

Rather than depend upon the white militia of the South, Hamilton advocated that Negro slaves be enlisted into the Continental Army. He did not say that slaves should be forced to fight in order that whites alone might be free. With their swords, he proposed to give the blacks their freedom. "The dictates of true policy" and of humanity enjoined, he said, that the Negro soldiers be emancipated: if the Americans did not offer the slaves something to fight for, the British assuredly would--and the results might be disastrous to the cause of American independence.

Unlike some of the men who later were to denounce him as a reactionary, Hamilton was sensible of the discrepancy between the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the hard fact of Negro slavery. He held slavery to be morally wrong and he did not agree with Thomas Jefferson, who, at almost this same time, was expressing his conviction that whites were inherently superior to blacks. "The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks," Hamilton remarked, "makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor in experience"; given equal opportunity, he predicted, it would be shown that "their natural faculties are as good as ours."

If there was no color line in intelligence and ability, the vast difference in the status, education and training of the two races made it essential in Hamilton's opinion that white officers be set over Negro troops. "Let officers be men of sense and sentiment," he said, "and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines, perhaps the better." He believed that even Russians--than whom no people in his estimation were more congenitally stupid--could be made into good soldiers if trained and led by non-Russian officers.

To recommend the use of Negro slaves in the armed forces of the southern states might well be reckoned an act of temerity; and yet this was what Hamilton and John Laurens set out to do in 1779. It was arranged that Laurens, the son of the president of the Continental Congress and, like Hamilton, a lieutenant colonel in the Continental Army, would go to South Carolina and persuade the legislature of that state to raise four battalions of blacks by levying contributions upon the owners in proportion to the number of slaves they owned. At the same time, Hamilton

was to induce Henry Laurens, the president of the Continental Congress, to introduce a proposal in Congress recommending that South Carolina raise the troops and promising to take the Negro battalions into Continental pay.

But the South Carolina planters were conspicuously lacking in both the idealism and the ideas of "true policy" held by Hamilton and Laurens. In South Carolina, Laurens found the legislature unalterably opposed to the black levies: "I was outvoted, having only reason on my side," he exclaimed, "and being opposed by a triple-headed monster, that shed the baneful influence of avarice, prejudice, and pusillanimity, in all our assemblies." Nor was the legislature willing to complete the Continental battalions by drafts from the militia: it put its faith in Providence and in the natural obstacles presented by the country. Nevertheless, Hamilton continued to insist that the victory would go to the side with the strongest battalions regardless of whether they were black or white.

Hamilton, *Works (Lodge), I*, 38, 181, 186, 194-196

(Part 2)

It is obvious, however, that his plans took too little account of such intangibles as sectional pride, jealousy and long-standing rivalries. Sensible as he was of the disadvantages experienced by an agricultural country in its dealings with foreign suppliers of manufactured goods, he failed to see that the same disadvantages might be incurred by an agricultural section of a country in its economic relationship with a manufacturing and commercial section. That the South should devote itself to the production of raw materials which the North turned into manufactured goods to be sold to southern planters and farmers struck him as a mutually advantageous arrangement. And yet nothing is clearer than that Hamilton required more in the way of patriotism and self-sacrifice from Southerners than, considering his philosophy of human nature, he might reasonably have asked of human beings. He told the farmers and planters to bear in mind the purity and loftiness of his objectives and the ultimate felicity that awaited them, but he was too honest to deny that the immediate profit was to go to northern capitalists, merchants, and manufacturers. Despite these assurances of future blessings, the agrarians suspected that when the time came for them to be served, the larder would be bare.

Moreover, Southerners never forgot one of the basic facts of American life that "the majority of Congress is in the North, and the slaves are to the South." True, Hamilton was no enemy of slavery in the South; he upheld the three-fifths rule and deplored the injection of the slavery issue into the debates in Congress. Nevertheless, in the opinion of southern slave-owners, the forces he represented were profoundly hostile to the peculiar institution. There was no telling when these northern businessmen and speculators would take it into their heads that slavery was bad for business.

Even admitting that Hamilton was averse to interfering with the slaves in the South, it was difficult to believe that he was well disposed toward their masters. And, in truth, he did not feel for them the close sympathy that might be expected from one gentleman to another. From Hamilton's point of view, the United States had a surfeit of agrarians. Whether small farmers or planter aristocrats, their capital was tied up in real estate and their sole objective seemed to be to acquire more land and slaves, thereby sinking the country deeper into the rut from which

Hamilton was attempting to extricate it. So strong was his distrust of their managerial ability and their attitude toward national problems that he felt it would be hardly less disastrous to turn the country over to these aristocrats than to the democrats. Improvident, fond of living like grands seigneurs on borrowed money, haters of Great Britain and of the national government, the southern planters impressed Hamilton as being more adept at wrecking than at building a government. From his point of view there was nothing wrong with the South except Southerners--but this was enough to cast a fatal blight upon the region.

Alexander Hamilton: Portrait in Paradox. Contributors: John C. Miller - author. Publisher: Harper & Row. Place of Publication: New York. Publication Year: 1959. Page Number: 296.

(Part 3)

A new king had been born before whom manufacturing and commerce were compelled to pay obeisance--a king whose progenitor was a Yankee inventor named Eli Whitney. The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 changed the course of American history more radically than did any of the measures projected by Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury. For the cotton gin gave Negro slavery a new lease on life--with all that implied for the future of the American republic. Moreover, the effect of the spread of cotton cultivation in the South was to bind that section economically more closely to Great Britain than to the northern states. The bulk of American cotton was exported to England, where it was manufactured into cloth. In 1861, when the South seceded from the union, Southerners expected that England would aid their bid for freedom, so imperative was its need of American cotton.

During the struggle precipitated by Hamilton's reports, the agricultural order had acquired in Thomas Jefferson a potent spokesman and adroit political leader. As a member of the Cabinet, Jefferson was in a strategic position to make his influence felt both upon Congress and the President, and he took full advantage of his opportunity to counterwork the plans of the Secretary of the Treasury. Not least among Jefferson's contributions to this work was the formulation of a political philosophy that could be set up against Hamiltonianism.

Even though Jefferson declared that he would welcome a revolution every twenty years, he was actually a far stauncher champion of things as they were in America than was Hamilton, to whom revolution was a thing of dread. Whenever the primacy of agriculture in the American economy was endangered, Jefferson revealed himself to be a true conservative. Whereas Hamilton embraced the nascent Industrial Revolution, Jefferson recoiled from it. To preserve the old American dedicated to agriculture and the way of life it entailed was Jefferson's fondest hope. And yet he recognized that the people must be left free to find their own salvation: if they chose the way of manufactures and commerce, Jefferson would have acquiesced, albeit reluctantly and with many misgivings, in their decision.

The Federalists prided themselves upon being the good, the wise and the rich; but Jefferson insisted that wisdom and goodness were a virtual monopoly of the plain farmers and the not-so-plain planters of the United States. The tillage and ownership of the soil he credited with imparting a special sanctity; he believed that agriculture was the first employment of man, chosen for him by God Himself.

While Jefferson acknowledged that commerce was the handmaid of agriculture, he feared that manufacturing would prove to be an oppressive and jealous master. If he was in opposition to Hamilton, he declared that he wished to see his countrymen engage in commerce only to the extent necessary to convey their surplus agricultural products to market; and he thought that manufactures were most properly carried on within the household. In place of factories and slums, the Virginian offered Americans an Elysium in which each farmer manufactured for his own needs and the labor force was composed not of "degenerate" and "monarchical" immigrants from Europe but of his own wife, children, and slaves. Hamilton's ideal of a balanced economy struck no chord in Jefferson; from his viewpoint, Americans already enjoyed the kind of economy best calculated to create a Heaven upon earth. But he feared that the serpent was already at their ear, whispering to them of national wealth, greatness, and power.

Dedicated as Jefferson was to preservation of the agricultural order, his conservatism stopped there. He wished to see the various states, particularly Virginia, reform their educational systems, correct inequities in representation in the state legislatures and revise their inheritance laws. Nor was he friendly toward slavery, the foundation of the planting economy of the South. Had Virginia aristocrats not been so preoccupied with erecting defenses against Hamiltonianism they might well have pondered the question whether Jefferson's ideals were not more inimical to their class interests than was Hamilton's program. For whatever else might have been said of Hamilton, he was no enemy of the economic, social, and political status quo of the South.

Jefferson, *Writings* (Ford), IX, 425; *Papers of Noah Webster*, 35; C. M. Wiltse, *The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy* (Chapel Hill 1935), p. 81.

(Part 4)

Against the "reveries" of Adam Smith, Hamilton placed the "fostering care" of the British government by which manufactures had been raised to unexampled heights; the "judicious and unremitting vigilance" of the Dutch government that had converted a small country into one of the greatest commercial nations in the world; and the example of "the great Colbert" who had brought France to a high level of commercial and industrial prosperity.

And yet, being of an eclectic and empirical cast of minds, Hamilton did not dismiss all of the *Wealth of Nations* simply because laissez faire appeared unsuited to the needs of the United States. On the contrary, he found much to commend in Smith's book and on many points, he was in agreement with the Scottish economist. Both men, for example, held the same objective in view--national prosperity and power. They agreed that hampering impediments ought to be removed in order that individual initiative and the competitive spirit could enjoy free play. They regarded production as the key to national wealth; they recognized self-interest to be the mainspring of human conduct; and they took a skeptical view of all philosophies that credited mankind with a highly developed sense of social responsibility. They were agreed that avarice, far from being a deadly sin, was an integral part of the order of nature. In this respect it might be said of Hamilton, as was said of Adam Smith, that he supposed "there was a Scotsman inside every man."

In essence, Hamilton's plans for the national economy were an application to this country of Adam Smith's concept of an international economy in which each country produced the commodities for which it was best adapted, thereby fulfilling the designs of Nature. Instead of

nations, Hamilton dealt with sections; but just as Adam Smith's principles tended to make Great Britain the workshop of the world, so Hamilton's ideas would have made the North the workshop of the union. In such an arrangement, he argued, neither section would be favored because "the aggregate prosperity of manufactures and the aggregate prosperity of agriculture are intimately connected"--a phrase he lifted bodily from the *Wealth of Nations*.

By 1792, Hamilton had received ample warning that this particular "design of Nature" was not going to be realized in the United States without a bitter and protracted sectional struggle. Nevertheless, Hamilton ignored the storm signals flying to the southward; under the firm conviction that the basis of an enduring union must be built upon an economic bedrock, he refused to be deflected from his course. "Ideas of contrariety of interests between the Northern and Southern regions of the union are, in the main, as unfounded as they are mischievous," he said. ". . . From New Hampshire to Georgia, the people of America are as uniform in their interests and manners as those of any [country] established in Europe. . . Under the regular and gentle influence of general laws, these varying interests will be constantly assimilating, till they embrace each other and assume the same complexion." He denied that any injury to the South would result from his policies; any arguments that purported to prove the contrary were, he insisted, "unsupported by documents, facts, or it may be added, probabilities." To silence Southerners' complaint that they were paying the bulk of the taxes, he advanced the then novel doctrine that "communities consume and contribute in proportion to their active or circulating wealth, and . . . the Northern regions have more active or accumulating wealth than the Southern."

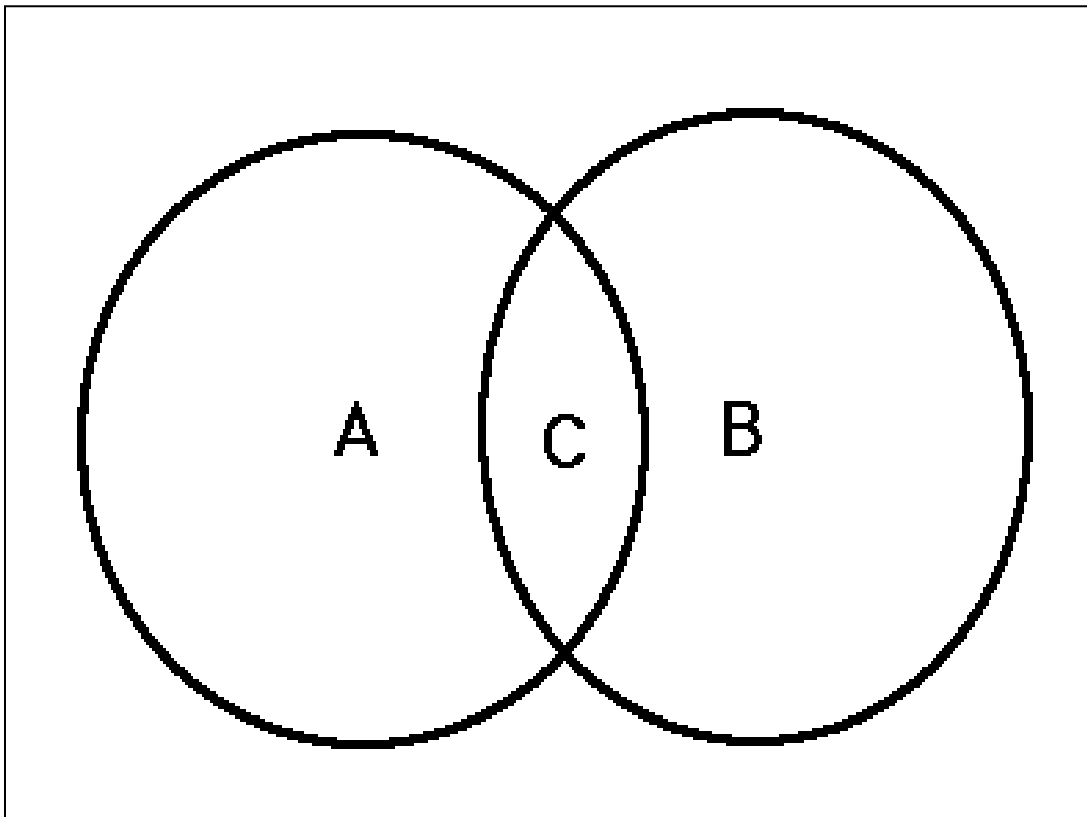
Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background* (New York, 1956), p. 95; Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 325, 421, 423, 431-435, 627-628; Ginzberg, *The House of Adam Smith*, pp. 156-158; Lionel Robbins, *Theory of Economic Policy*, pp. 12, 18; F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Revolutionary Era* (London, 1931), pp. 173-174, 177; Robert M. MacIver, *The Web of Government* (New York, 1947), p. 335; Whittaker, *History of Economic Ideas*, p. 316; *Journal of Political Economy*, XXXVI (1928), 432; Dunbar, *Economic Essays*, p. 47.

Reading Diagram:

Critical Questions:

Based on the reading: “Alexander Hamilton and Slavery”, how does Alexander Hamilton feel about slavery, and slavery in terms of American economics?

- What characteristics do these items have in common (intersecting portion C), slavery and in terms of American economics?
- In relation to American economics according to Hamilton, what is good about slavery (A) and what is bad (B) based on the readings?



The Economics of Slavery

Outline

- I. Slave Imports**
 - A. 666,000 before the Congressional ban in 1808
 - B. Represents 7% of total 10 million slaves brought to Western Hemisphere
 - C. Total Imports: Brazil 36%; Caribbean 40%; and Spanish America 17%
- II. Distribution and Growth of Slaves**
 - A. Distribution in 1825: U.S. 36%; Brazil 31%; Caribbean 21%; and Spanish America 11%
 - B. Implication: U.S. had much greater rates of natural increase
 - C. By 1860 the Southern U.S. slave population was 3.84 million -53% of the Southern population (26,000 free blacks in the South)
- III. Was Slavery Profitable?**
 - A. Historically, slaves were as much an effect as a cause of wealth.
 - B. If unprofitable we should observe manumission and discouragement of births.
 - C. The prices were high for conspicuous consumption – prime field hand \$1200 to \$1500 in the late 1850s (about \$18,000 in 1997 dollars)
 - D. Despite up front costs –rate of return about 10%
 - E. Future profitability expected: over the 1850s prices relative to rentals were increasing.
 - F. Profits rested on efficiency of the gang labor system – Shorter hours but greater intensity than free whites.
- IV. The Treatment of Slaves**
 - A. Caveat: well-being is about more than physical treatment – freedom is valuable in of itself
 - B. Slaves were valuable capital assets.
 - C. Adult diet adequate – pork, beef, milk, sweet potatoes, and corn.
 - D. Height of male slaves was 67.2 inches compared to 68.2 inches for northern males. (Africans Imported into the U.S.: 64.2 inches; Cuban born slaves: 63.6 inches)
 - E. Infants and children malnourished.
 1. Birth weight 5.1 lbs.
 2. Infant (age 0-1) mortality 350 per 1000 –double the rate of white children. Children moved quickly to solids and unsanitary formulas.
 3. Child mortality (ages 1-4) 201 per 1000 – 93 per 1000 for U.S. – little meat for children (unprofitable investment)
 4. Malnourished children are less aggressive and more dependent.
 5. Mortality rates equal by adulthood (ages 20-24): black is 40 per 1000; and white is 39 per 1000
 6. Poor prenatal conditions: typically, 54 hours of intense physical labor bent over which is harmful for fetal development.
 7. Within one week of childbirth still averaging 36% of normal workload

- F. Slave Families
 1. Ex-slave narratives indicated that 2/3 lived in nuclear families as slaves but threat remained.
 2. Slave women: 20.6 years at birth of first child – compared to 24 years for white farm women.
 3. Miscegenation: 4-8% of slave children fathered by whites
- G. Reward versus punishment
 1. Rewards: managerial positions; extra food rations, manumission
 2. Punishment: whipping, food deprivation, solitary confinement, public humiliation
 3. Pain (whipping) capable of generating greater work effort but less care and require constant supervision.
 4. Reward capable of generating creative work.
 5. Implications for long-run viability of slavery if society is moving towards more skilled jobs.
- V. **Situational Ethics: How should we view behavior of blacks in bondage?**
 - A. Moral: passive resistance versus hard work to capture rewards
 - B. Amoral: slaves responded to environmental factors and no shame or pride in behavior
 - C. How we view cooperation versus resistance depends on specific atmosphere
 1. Prisoner of War atmosphere: non-cooperation laudable
 2. "Good" master: cooperation seems more reasonable.

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Slavery and the Law in Virginia

The Growth of the Black Population:

1625	23
1648	300
1671	2,000
1680	3,000
1700	16,390
1720	26,559
1730	30,000
1740	60,000
1775	210,000



SLAVE LAWS PASSED IN VIRGINIA:

1640-1660: The Critical Period: Custom to Law when Status Changed to "Servant for Life"

- 1639/40 -- Blacks excluded from the requirement of possessing arms.
- 1642 -- Black women counted as tithables (taxable).
- 1662 -- Possibility of life servitude for Blacks.

1660-1680: Slave Laws Further Restrict Freedom of Blacks and Legalize Different Treatment for Blacks and Whites

- 1667 -- Baptism does not bring freedom to Blacks.
- 1669 -- An about the "casual killing of slaves" establishing that "if any slave resist his master and by the extremity of the correction should chance to die, that his death is not accmpted Felony."
- 1670 -- Servant for life: the "normal" condition judged for Blacks.
- 1670 -- Forbade free Blacks and Native Americans, "though baptized," to own Christian servants.

1680-1705: Slave Laws Reflect racism and the Deliberate Separation of Blacks and Whites. Color becomes the Determining Factor. Conscious Efforts to Police Slave Conduct Rigidly.

- 1680 -- Prescription of thirty lashes on the bare back "if any negroe or other slave shall presume to lift up his hand against any Christian."
- 1680's -- Development of a separate legal code providing distinct trial procedures and harsher punishments for negroes.
- 1680's -- Status of the child is determined by the status or condition of the mother.
- 1680's -- Severe punishment for slaves who leave their master's property or for hiding or resisting capture.
- 1691 -- Banishment for any white person married to a negroe or mulatto and approved a systematic plan to capture "outlying slaves."
- 1705 -- All negroe, mulatto, and Indian slaves shall be held, taken, and adjudged to be real estate.
- 1705 -- Dismemberment of unruly slaves was made legal.

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Slavery Research: Focus Question Worksheet

***Students will research slavery during the colonial period and answer focus questions**

FOCUS QUESTION: WHAT SKILLS DID SLAVES POSSESS?	
Skills	Why would these skills be important during the colonial period?
FOCUS QUESTION: HOW DID THE SLAVE OWNERS TREAT THEIR SLAVES?	
Specific behaviors toward slaves	What attitudes towards slavery do slave owners hold?

FOCUS QUESTION: WHY WAS THE ECONOMY IN THE SOUTH SO SLAVE DEPENDENT?

What was the economic value of slaves in the south and how did slavery politically affect the Constitution?

What changes occurred in the south to lessen the need for slavery?

FOCUS QUESTION: BY WHAT MEANS DID SLAVES ESCAPE AND WHERE WERE THEIR DESTINATIONS?

Possible escape method/route

How would these now “free people” affect the colonial economy?

The Federalist Papers (An Introduction by Clinton Rossiter)

Conceived in the pressure of a great crisis in human events, written with a haste that often bordered on the frantic, printed and published as if it were the most perishable kind of daily news, *The Federalist* bore few marks of immortality at birth. It was, in fact, only one of several hundred salvos in the loud war of words that accompanied the protracted struggle over ratification of the Constitution. That new charter of government, it will be remembered, had been agreed upon and signed at Philadelphia, September 17, 1781, transmitted to the Congress then existing under the Articles of Confederation, and thereupon laid, with no great show of enthusiasm, before the people of the United States. The approval of ratifying conventions in nine of the thirteen states was to bring the Constitution into effect. Few of its authors and supporters imagined that it would be easy to win such a margin of approval in the chaotic political circumstances of the world's first experiment in popular government over an extended area; all recognized that a clear-cut vote against the Constitution in any one of four key states would be enough by itself to destroy their hopes for "a more perfect Union."

One of these states was New York, among whose claims to a vital role in the affairs of the new republic were a growing population, a lively commerce, a pivotal position on the Atlantic seaboard, and New York City, then the seat of the government of the United States. It was also the home of Governor George Clinton, a doughty politician whose principles and prejudices and skills made him the most formidable of opponents to the proposed Constitution. Plainly New York was a state that could easily be lost and yet had to be won; plainly it was a state in which arguments voiced in public debate or actions taken in the ratifying convention might influence the course of events in other states.

It was with such thoughts as these in mind that Alexander Hamilton, the recognized leader of the forces of ratification in New York, turned in the fall of 1787 to the task of winning his state to the cause of the new Constitution. The story of how Hamilton persuaded and plotted and bullied his way over the months to the narrowest of victories in the New York conversion is an epic of American politics that deserves to be better known. What is important to us about this amazing effort is that Hamilton found it both practically expedient and psychologically comforting to supplement his political activities with a contribution to the literary war. Without his foresight, energy, and organizational skill there would have been no *Federalist* to stiffen the friends of the Constitution and to instruct the minds of posterity. He conceived the idea of a series of thoughtful communications that would explain and support the proposed Constitution; he scrambled for worthy contributors and finally found them in John Jay and James Madison; he wrote almost two thirds of the total of 175,000 words; he carried on the project to its scheduled end long after the other two men had been forced to leave the field. While the Publius we know and cherish today is a composite of three men, one of these men, Alexander Hamilton, must ever be regarded as the political magician who brought Publius to life.

Federalist Paper No. 1 by Alexander Hamilton

AFTER an unequivocal experience of the inefficacy of the subsisting federal government, you are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance; comprehending in its consequences nothing less than the existence of the UNION, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an empire in many respects the most interesting in the world. It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind.

This idea will add the inducements of philanthropy to those of patriotism, to heighten the solicitude which all considerate and good men must feel for the event. Happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiased by considerations not connected with the public good. But this is a thing more ardently to be wished than seriously to be expected. The plan offered to our deliberations affects too many particular interests, innovates upon too many local institutions, not to involve in its discussion a variety of objects foreign to its merits, and of views, passions, and prejudices little favorable to the discovery of truth.

Among the most formidable of the obstacles which the new Constitution will have to encounter may readily be distinguished the obvious interest of a certain class of men in every State to resist all changes which may hazard a diminution of the power, emolument, and consequence of the offices they hold under the State establishments; and the perverted ambition of another class of men, who will either hope to aggrandize themselves by the confusions of their country, or will flatter themselves with fairer prospects of elevation from the subdivision of the empire into several partial confederacies than from its union under one government.

It is not, however, my design to dwell upon observations of this nature. I am well aware that it would be disingenuous to resolve indiscriminately the opposition of any set of men (merely because their situations might subject them to suspicion) into interested or ambitious views. Candor will oblige us to admit that even such men may be actuated by upright intentions; and it cannot be doubted that much of the opposition which has made its appearance, or may hereafter make its appearance, will spring from sources, blameless at least if not respectable -- the honest errors of minds led astray by preconceived jealousies and fears. So numerous indeed and so powerful are the causes which serve to give a false bias to the judgment, that we, upon many occasions, see wise and good men on the wrong as well as on the right side of questions of the first magnitude to society. This circumstance, if duly attended to, would furnish a lesson of moderation to those who are ever so thoroughly persuaded of their being in the right in any controversy. And a further reason for caution, in this respect, might be drawn from the reflection that we are not always sure that those who advocate the truth are influenced by purer principles than their antagonists. Ambition, avarice, personal animosity, party opposition, and many other motives not more laudable than these, are apt to operate as well upon those who support as those who oppose the right side of a question. Were there not even these inducements to moderation,

nothing could be more ill-judged than that intolerant spirit which has at all times characterized political parties. For in politics, as in religion, it is equally absurd to aim at making proselytes by fire and sword. Heresies in either can rarely be cured by persecution.

And yet, however just these sentiments will be allowed to be, we have already sufficient indications that it will happen in this as in all former cases of great national discussion. A torrent of angry and malignant passions will be let loose. To judge from the conduct of the opposite parties, we shall be led to conclude that they will mutually hope to evince the justness of their opinions and to increase the number of their converts by the loudness of their declamations and by the bitterness of their invectives. An enlightened zeal for the energy and efficiency of government will be stigmatized as the offspring of a temper fond of despotic power and hostile to the principles of liberty. An over-scrupulous jealousy of danger to the rights of the people, which is more commonly the fault of the head than of the heart, will be represented as mere pretense and artifice, the stale bait for popularity at the expense of public good. It will be forgotten, on the one hand, that jealousy is the usual concomitant of violent love, and that the noble enthusiasm of liberty is too apt to be infected with a spirit of narrow and illiberal distrust. On the other hand, it will be equally forgotten that the vigor of government is essential to the security of liberty; that, in the contemplation of a sound and well-informed judgment, their interests can never be separated; and that a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidding appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing demagogues and ending tyrants.

In the course of the preceding observations, I have had an eye, my fellow-citizens, to putting you upon your guard against all attempts, from whatever quarter, to influence your decision in a matter of the utmost moment to your welfare by any impressions other than those which may result from the evidence of truth. You will, no doubt, at the same time have collected from the general scope of them that they proceed from a source not unfriendly to the new Constitution. Yes, my countrymen, I own to you that after having given it an attentive consideration, I am clearly of opinion it is your interest to adopt it. I am convinced that this is the safest course for your liberty, your dignity, and your happiness. I affect not reserves which I do not feel. I will not amuse you with an appearance of deliberation when I have decided. I frankly acknowledge to you my convictions, and I will freely lay before you the reasons on which they are founded. The consciousness of good intentions disdains ambiguity. I shall not, however, multiply professions on this head. My motives must remain in the depository of my own breast. My arguments will be open to all and may be judged of by all. They shall at least be offered in a spirit which will not disgrace the cause of truth.

I propose, in a series of papers, to discuss the following interesting particulars: -- *The utility of the UNION to your political prosperity* -- *The insufficiency of the present Confederation to preserve that Union* -- *The necessity of a government at least equally energetic with the one proposed, to the attainment of this object* -- *The conformity of the proposed Constitution to the true principles of republican government* -- *Its analogy to your own State constitution* -- and lastly, *The additional security which its adoption will afford to the preservation of that species of government, to liberty, and to property.*

In the progress of this discussion, I shall endeavor to give a satisfactory answer to all the objections which shall have made their appearance that may seem to have any claim to your attention.

It may perhaps be thought superfluous to offer arguments to prove the utility of the UNION, a point, no doubt, deeply engraved on the hearts of the great body of the people in every State, and one which, it may be imagined, has no adversaries. But the fact is that we already hear it whispered in the private circles of those who oppose the new Constitution, that the thirteen States are of too great extent for any general system, and that we must resort to separate confederacies of distinct portions of the whole. This doctrine will, in all probability, be gradually propagated, till it has votaries enough to countenance an open avowal of it. For nothing can be more evident to those who are able to take an enlarged view of the subject than the alternative of an adoption of the new Constitution or a dismemberment of the Union. It will therefore be of use to begin by examining the advantages of that Union, the certain evils, and the probable dangers, to which every State will be exposed from its dissolution. This shall accordingly constitute the subject of my next address.

Federalist Paper No. 6 by Alexander Hamilton

THE three last numbers of this paper have been dedicated to an enumeration of the dangers to which we should be exposed, in a state of disunion, from the arms and arts of foreign nations. I shall now proceed to delineate dangers of a different and, perhaps, still more alarming kind -- those which will in all probability flow from dissensions between the States themselves and from domestic factions and convulsions. These have been already in some instances slightly anticipated; but they deserve a more particular and more full investigation.

A man must be far gone in Utopian speculations who can seriously doubt that if these States should either be wholly disunited, or only united in partial confederacies, the subdivisions into which they might be thrown would have frequent and violent contests with each other. To presume a want of motives for such contests as an argument against their existence would be to forget that men are ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious. To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent, unconnected sovereignties situated in the same neighborhood would be to disregard the uniform course of human events, and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages.

The causes of hostility among nations are innumerable. There are some which have a general and almost constant operation upon the collective bodies of society. Of this description are the love of power or the desire of pre-eminence and dominion -- the jealousy of power, or the desire of equality and safety. There are others which have a mere circumscribed though an equally operative influence within their spheres. Such are the rival ships and competitions of commerce between commercial nations. And there are others, not less numerous than either of the former, which take their origin entirely in private passions; in the attachments, enmities, interests, hopes, and fears of leading individuals in the communities of which they are members. Men of this class, whether the favorites of a king or of a people, have in too many instances abused the confidence they possessed; and assuming the pretext of some public motive, have not scrupled to sacrifice the national tranquility to personal advantage or personal gratification. The celebrated Pericles, in compliance with the resentment of a prostitute, at the expense of much of the blood

and treasure of his countrymen, attacked, vanquished, and destroyed the city of the *Samnians*. The same man, stimulated by private pique against the *Megarensians*, another nation of Greece, or to avoid a prosecution with which he was threatened as an accomplice in a supposed theft of the statuary of Phidias, or to get rid of the accusations prepared to be brought against him for dissipating the funds of the state in the purchase of popularity, or from a combination of all these causes, was the primitive author of that famous and fatal war, distinguished in the Grecian annals by the name of the *Peloponnesian* war; which, after various vicissitudes, intermissions, and renewals, terminated in the ruin of the Athenian commonwealth.

The ambitious cardinal, who was prime minister to Henry VIII, permitting his vanity to aspire to the Triple Crown, entertained hopes of succeeding in the acquisition of that splendid prize by the influence of the Emperor Charles V. To secure the favor and interest of this enterprising and powerful monarch, he precipitated England into a war with France, contrary to the plainest dictates of policy, and at the hazard of the safety and independence, as well of the kingdom over which he presided by his counsels as of Europe in general. For if there ever a sovereign was who bid fair to realize the project of universal monarchy, it was the Emperor Charles V, of whose intrigues Wolsey was at once the instrument and the dupe.

The influence which the bigotry of one female, the petulancies of another, and the cables of a third, had in the contemporary policy, ferments, and pacifications of a considerable part of Europe, are topics that have been too often descanted upon not to be generally known.

To multiply examples of the agency of personal considerations in the production of great national events, either foreign or domestic, according to their direction, would be an unnecessary waste of time. Those who have but a superficial acquaintance with the sources from which they are to be drawn will themselves recollect a variety of instances; and those who have a tolerable knowledge of human nature will not stand in need of such lights to form their opinion either of the reality or extent of that agency. Perhaps, however, a reference, tending to illustrate the general principle, may with propriety be made to a case which has lately happened among us. If Shays had not been a *desperate debtor*, it is much to be doubted whether Massachusetts would have been plunged into a civil war.

But notwithstanding the concurring testimony of experience, in this particular, there are still to be found visionary or designing men, who stand ready to advocate the paradox of perpetual peace between the States, though dismembered and alienated from each other. The genius of republics (say they) is pacific; the spirit of commerce tends to soften the manners of men, and to extinguish those inflammable humors which have so often kindled into wars. Commercial republics, like ours, will never be disposed to waste themselves in ruinous contentions with each other. They will be governed by mutual interest and will cultivate a spirit of mutual amity and concord.

Is it not (we may ask these projectors in politics) the true interest of all nations to cultivate the same benevolent and philosophic spirit? If this be their true interest, have they in fact pursued it? Has it not, on the contrary, invariably been found that momentary passions, and immediate interests, have a more active and imperious control over human conduct than general or remote considerations of policy, utility, or justice? Have republics in practice been less addicted to war than monarchies? Is not the former administered by men as well as the latter? Are there not aversions, predilections, rivalships, and desires of unjust acquisitions that affect nations as well

as kings? Are not popular assemblies frequently subject to the impulses of rage, resentment, jealousy, avarice, and of other irregular and violent propensities? Is it not well known that their determinations are often governed by a few individuals in whom they place confidence, and are, of course, liable to be tinctured by the passions and views of those individuals? Has commerce hitherto done any thing more than change the objects of war? Is not the love of wealth as domineering and enterprising a passion as that of power or glory? Have there not been as many wars founded upon commercial motives since that has become the prevailing system of nations, as were before occasioned by the cupidity of territory or dominion? Has not the spirit of commerce, in many instances, administered new, incentives to the appetite, both for the one and for the other? Let experience, the least fallible guide of human opinions, be appealed to for an answer to these inquiries.

Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Carthage were all republics; two of them, Athens, and Carthage, of the commercial kind. Yet were they as often engaged in wars, offensive and defensive, as the neighboring monarchies of the same times. Sparta was little better than a well-regulated camp; and Rome was never sated of carnage and conquest.

Carthage, though a commercial republic, was the aggressor in the very war that ended in her destruction. Hannibal had carried her arms into the heart of Italy and to the gates of Rome, before Scipio, in turn, gave him an overthrow in the territories of Carthage and made a conquest of the commonwealth.

Venice, in later times, figured more than once in wars of ambition, till, becoming an object to the other Italian states, Pope Julius the Second found means to accomplish that formidable league, which gave a deadly blow to the power and pride of this haughty republic.

The provinces of Holland, till they were overwhelmed in debts and taxes, took a leading and conspicuous part in the wars of Europe. They had furious contests with England for the dominion of the sea and were among the most persevering and most implacable of the opponents of Louis XIV.

In the government of Britain, the representatives of the people compose one branch of the national legislature. Commerce has been for ages the predominant pursuit of that country. Few nations, nevertheless, have been more frequently engaged in war; and the wars in which that kingdom has been engaged have, in numerous instances, proceeded from the people.

There have been, if I may so express it, almost as many portlier as royal wars. The cries of the nation and the importunities of their representatives have, upon various occasions, dragged their monarchs into war, or continued them in it, contrary to their inclinations, and sometimes? Contrary to the real interests of the state. In that memorable struggle for superiority between the rival houses of *Austria* and *Bourbon*, which so long kept Europe in a flame, it is well known that the antipathies of the English against the French, seconding the ambition, or rather the avarice, of a favorite leader, protracted the war beyond the limits marked out by sound policy, and for a considerable time in opposition to the views of the court.

The wars of these two last-mentioned nations have in a great measure grown out of commercial considerations -- the desire of supplanting and the fear of being supplanted, either branches of

traffic or in the general advantages of trade and navigation, or sometimes evens the more: culpable desire of sharing in the commerce of other nations without their consent.

The last war but two between Britain and Spain sprang from the attempts of the English merchants to prosecute an illicit trade with the Spanish Main. These unjustifiable practices on their part produced severity on the part of the Spaniards towards the subjects of Great Britain which were not more justifiable, because they exceeded the bounds of a just retaliation and were chargeable with inhumanity and cruelty. Many of the English who were taken on the Spanish coast were sent to dig in the mines of Potosi; and by the usual progress of a spirit of resentment, the innocent was, after a while, confounded with the guilty in indiscriminate punishment. The complaints of the merchants kindled a violent flame throughout the nation, which soon after broke out in the House of Commons and was communicated from that body to the ministry. Letters of reprisal were granted, and a war ensued, which in its consequences overthrew all the alliances that but twenty years before had been formed with sanguine expectations of the most beneficial fruits.

From this summary of what has taken place in other countries, whose situations have borne the nearest resemblance to our own, what reason can we have to confide in those reveries which would seduce us into an expectation of peace and cordiality between the members of the present confederacy, in a state of separation? Have we not already seen enough of the fallacy and extravagance of those idle theories which have amused us with promises of an exemption from the imperfections, the weaknesses, and the evils incident to society in every shape? Is it not time to awake from the deceitful dream of a golden age and to adopt as a practical maxim for the direction of our political conduct that we, as well as the other inhabitants of the globe, are yet remote from the happy empire of perfect wisdom and perfect virtue?

Let the point of extreme depression to which our national dignity and credit have sunk, let the inconveniences felt everywhere from a lax and ill administration of government, let the revolt of a part of the State of North Carolina, the late menacing disturbances in Pennsylvania, and the actual insurrections and rebellions in Massachusetts, declare --!

So far is the general sense of mankind from corresponding with the tenets of those who endeavor to lull asleep our apprehensions of discord and hostility between the States, in the event of disunion, that it has from long observation of the progress of society become a sort of axiom in politics that vicinity, or nearness of situation, constitutes nations natural enemies. An intelligent writer expresses himself on this subject to this effect: "NEIGHBORING NATIONS [says he] are naturally ENEMIES of each other, unless their common weakness forces them to league in a CONFEDERATE REPUBLIC, and their constitution prevents the differences that neighborhood occasions, extinguishing that secret jealousy which disposes all states to aggrandize themselves at the expense of their neighbors." This passage, at the same time, points out the EVIL and suggests the REMEDY. PUBLIUS

Federalist Paper No. 8 by Alexander Hamilton

ASSUMING it therefore as an established truth that the several States, in case of disunion, or such combinations of them as might happen to be formed out of the wreck of the general Confederacy, would be subject to those vicissitudes of peace and war, of friendship and enmity with each other, which have fallen to the lot of all neighboring nations not united under one government, let us enter into a concise detail of some of the consequences that would attend such a situation.

War between the States, in the first period of their separate existence, would be accompanied with much greater distresses than it commonly is in those countries where regular military establishments have long obtained. The disciplined armies always kept on foot on the continent of Europe, though they bear a malignant aspect to liberty and economy, have, notwithstanding, been productive of the signal advantage of rendering sudden conquests impracticable, and of preventing that rapid desolation which used to mark the progress of war prior to their introduction. The art of fortification has contributed to the same ends. The nations of Europe are encircled with chains of fortified places, which mutually obstruct invasion. Campaigns are wasted in reducing two or three frontier garrisons to gain admittance into an enemy's country. Similar impediments occur at every step to exhaust the strength and delay the progress of an invader. Formerly an invading army would penetrate the heart of a neighboring country almost as soon as intelligence of its approach could be received; but now a comparatively small force of disciplined troops, acting on the defensive, with the aid of posts, is able to impede, and finally to frustrate, the enterprises of one much more considerable. The history of war in that quarter of the globe is no longer a history of nations subdued and empires overturned, but of towns taken and retaken, of battles that decide nothing, of retreats more beneficial than victories, of much effort and little acquisition.

In this country the scene would be altogether reversed. The jealousy of military establishments would postpone them as long as possible. The want of fortifications, leaving the frontiers of one State open to another, would facilitate inroads. The populous States would, with little difficulty, overrun their less populous neighbors. Conquests would be as easy to be made as difficult to be retained. War, therefore, would be desultory and predatory. PLUNDER and devastation ever march in the train of irregulars. The calamities of individuals would make the principal figure in the events which would characterize our military exploits.

This picture is not too highly wrought; though, I confess, it would not long remain a just one. Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct. Even the ardent love of liberty will, after a time, give way to its dictates. The violent destruction of life and property incident to war, the continual effort and alarm attendant on a state of continual danger, will compel nations the most attached to liberty to resort for repose and security to institutions which tend to destroy their civil and political rights. To be safer, they at length become willing to run the risk of being less free.

The institutions chiefly alluded to are STANDING ARMIES and the correspondent appendages of military establishments. Standing armies, it is said, are not provided against in the new Constitution; and it is thence inferred that they may exist under it. This inference, from the very form of the proposition, is, at best, problematical and uncertain. But standing armies, it may be

replied, must inevitably result from dissolution of the Confederacy. Frequent war and constant apprehension, which require a state of as constant preparation, will, infallibly produce them. The weaker States, or confederacies, would first have recourse to them to put themselves upon equality with their more potent neighbors. They would endeavor to supply the inferiority of population and resources by a more regular and effective system of defense, by disciplined troops, and by fortifications. They would, at the same time, be necessitated to strengthen the executive arm of government, in doing which their constitutions would acquire a progressive direction towards monarchy. It is of the nature of war to increase the executive at the expense of the legislative authority.

The expedients which have been mentioned would soon give the States, or confederacies, that made use of them superiority over their neighbors. Small states, or states of less natural strength, under vigorous governments, and with the assistance of disciplined armies, have often triumphed over large states, or states of greater natural strength, which have been destitute of these advantages. Neither the pride nor the safety of the more important States, or confederacies, would permit them long to submit to this mortifying and adventitious superiority. They would quickly resort to means like those by which it had been affected, to reinstate themselves in their lost pre-eminence. Thus, we should, in a little time; see established in every part of this country the same engines of despotism which have been the scourge of the old world. This, at least, would be the natural course of things; and our reasoning's will be the more likely to be just in proportion as they are accommodated to this standard.

These are not vague inferences drawn from supposed or speculative defects in a constitution, the whole power of which is lodged in the hands of a people, or their representatives and delegates, but they are solid conclusions, drawn from the natural and necessary progress of human affairs.

It may, perhaps, be asked, by way of objection to this, why did not standing armies spring up out of the contentions which so often distracted the ancient republics of Greece? Different answers, equally satisfactory, may be given to this question. The industrious habits of the people of the present day, absorbed in the pursuits of gain and devoted to the improvements of agriculture and commerce, are incompatible with the condition of a nation of soldiers, which was the true condition of the people of those republics. The means of revenue, which have been so greatly multiplied by the increase of gold and silver and of the arts of industry, and the science of finance, which is the offspring of modern times, concurring with the habits of nations, have produced an entire revolution in the system of war, and have rendered disciplined armies, distinct from the body of the citizens, the roseparable companion of frequent hostility.

There is a wide difference, also, between military establishments in a country seldom exposed by its situation to internal invasions, and in one which is often subject to them and always apprehensive of them. The rulers of the former can have no good pretext, if they are even so inclined, to keep on foot armies so numerous as must be maintained in the latter. These armies being, in the first case, rarely if at all called into activity for interior defense, the people are in no danger of being broken to military subordination. The laws are not accustomed to relaxation in favor of military exigencies; the civil state remains in full vigor, neither corrupted, nor confounded with the principles or propensities of the other state. The smallness of the army renders the natural strength of the community an overmatch for it; and the citizens, not habituated to took up to the military power for protection, or to submit to its oppressions, neither love nor fear the soldiery; they view them with a spirit of jealous acquiescence in a necessary

evil and stand ready to resist a power which they suppose may be exerted to the prejudice of their rights.

The army under such circumstances may usefully aid the magistrate to suppress a small faction, or an occasional mob, or insurrection; but it will be unable to enforce encroachments against the united efforts of the great body of the people.

In a country in the predicament last described the contrary of all this happens. The perpetual menacing of danger obliges the government to be always prepared to repel it; its armies must be numerous enough for instant defense. The continual necessity for their services enhances the importance of the soldier, and proportionally degrades the condition of the citizen. The military state becomes elevated above the civil. The inhabitants of territories, often the theater of war, are unavoidably subjected to frequent infringements on their rights, which serve to weaken their sense of those rights; and by degrees the people are brought to consider the soldiery not only as their protectors but as their superiors. The transition from this disposition to that of considering them masters is neither remote nor difficult; but it is very difficult to prevail upon a people under such impressions to make a bold or effectual resistance to usurpations supported by the military power.

The kingdom of Great Britain falls within the first description. An insular situation, and a powerful marine, guarding it in a great measure against the possibility of foreign invasion, supersedes the necessity of a numerous army within the kingdom. A sufficient force to make head against a sudden descent, till the militia could have time to rally and embody, is all that has been deemed requisite. No motive of national policy has demanded, nor would public opinion have tolerated, a larger number of troops upon its domestic establishment. There has been, for a long time past, little room for the operation of the other causes, which have been enumerated as the consequences of internal war. This peculiar felicity of situation has, in a great degree, contributed to preserve the liberty which that country to this day enjoys, in spite of the prevalent venality and corruption. If, on the contrary, Britain had been situated on the continent, and had been compelled, as she would have been, by that situation, to make her military establishments at home coextensive with those of the other great powers of Europe, she, like them, would in all probability be, at this day, a victim to the absolute power of a single man. 'Tis possible, though not easy, that the people of that island may be enslaved from other causes; but it cannot be by the prowess of an army so inconsiderable as that which has been usually kept up within the kingdom.

If we are wise enough to preserve the Union we may for ages enjoy an advantage similar to that of an insulated situation. Europe is at a great distance from us. Her colonies in our vicinity will be likely to continue too much disproportioned in strength to be able to give us any dangerous annoyance. Extensive military establishments cannot, in this position, be necessary to our security. But if we should be disunited, and the integral parts should either remain separated, or, which is most probable, should be thrown together into two or three confederacies, we should be, in a short course of time, in the predicament of the continental powers of Europe -- our liberties would be a prey to the means of defending ourselves against the ambition and jealousy of each other.

This is an idea not superficial nor futile, but solid and weighty. It deserves the most serious and mature consideration of every prudent and honest man of whatever party. If such men will make

a firm and solemn pause and meditate dispassionately on the importance of this interesting idea; if they will contemplate it in all its attitude, and trace it to all its consequences, they will not hesitate to part with trivial objections to a Constitution, the rejection of which would in all probability put a final period to the Union. The airy phantoms that flit before the distempered imaginations of some of its adversaries would quickly give place to the more substantial prospects of dangers, real, certain, and formidable. PUBLIUS

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