

Understanding the Assignment: The Assignment: The Podcast

Episode 100: The Compromise of 1790: Beef Between Alexander Hamilton and James Madison

Welcome back my loyal subjects to episode 100 of “Understanding the Assignment: The Assignment: The Podcast,” where hopefully, Eva gets another A for her assignment.

I am the one and only host of this podcast, Your Supreme Ruler, and today I have a very **juicy** topic for y'all because I will be yapping about The Beef Between Alexander Hamilton and James Madison OR, for the girls that don't know it, The Compromise of 1790.

So, what WAS the beef between Hamilton and Madison? Well, in the years prior to the Compromise of 1790, Hamilton and Madison already didn't really like each other. There were a lot of issues that they butted heads on but it can generally be boiled down to Northern values vs. Southern values.

This time around, the differences in views between Hamilton and Madison held congress in a prolonged deadlock that lasted over several months, all because of their arguments over whether the federal government or the states should hold a majority of political and economic power.

In 1789, the year before the compromise, Hamilton had approached the House of Representatives with his new financial plan for the country. Basically, he wanted to combine each individual state's war debts into one public debt, which would be incurred by the new federal government. But, a majority of House members weren't a fan of this plan, especially Hamilton's primary opposition, James Madison.

So, when trying to think of strategies to win over the House of Reps, Hamilton remembered that Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were good friends.

So, in January of 1790, Hamilton approached Jefferson and convinced him to help try to get the House of Reps to agree to his financial plan.

Though Jefferson had also disagreed with Hamilton's plan, there was a common goal between the two that they both wanted to better the country (or whatever American loving, god fearing white men would say at that time).

PLUS, if Jefferson agreed to Hamilton's financial plan, then it would be likely that he would convince his good friend James Madison too! And so, around June 20 of 1790, they had dinner.

Now, let's actually talk about the compromise. The actual details of what went on at that dinner are incredibly vague. Historians have been trying to figure out what happened for YEARS and YEARS, but the only account of the events is from Jefferson himself. Neither Madison or Hamilton ever wrote anything about it.

But based on what's been found, here's what we know:

Hamilton's side of the deal was the following:

Jefferson and Madison, while still publicly opposing Hamilton's financial plan, would get members of their coalition to vote in its favor so that Hamilton would win the majority.

In addition to this, Hamilton wanted to be granted the position of Secretary of the Treasury so that he had the power to enact his financial plan as he saw fit.

In return, on Jefferson and Madison's side of the deal:

Hamilton would gain supporters of the plan for the new nation's federal city to be located on the Potomac River, which was at the time considered Southern territory. Meaning that the capital of the country would in a way, "belong" to the south.

Obviously it didn't really turn out like that since the line between north and south kinda blurs around the D.C. area, but I'm sure it meant something at that time.

Once it was all said and done the months-long congressional deadlock was resolved, meaning that Congress was finally able to pass bills and further the development of the country, including the following:

The Funding Act, which included Hamilton's debt assumption plan, was passed in August of 1790- establishing a NATIONAL debt, rather than individual state debts, and fulfilling Hamilton's demands.

The Residence Act, which I have mentioned in a few of my previous blog posts, was also passed in 1790 and allowed President George Washington to choose the new permanent location of the nation's capital along the Potomac River, fulfilling Jefferson and Madison's demands.

And funny enough, even though the compromise included details that furthered his own political goals, Jefferson actually later stated that he regretted making the deal with Hamilton, saying that he felt that he was tricked into contributing to the centralization of American and blah blah blah.

Which, I mean, what did he think unifying all the debt under one nation meant? Mmmm I don't know, but this is why we hire lawyers.

So anyways, that's the end of my yap session!

Thank you loyal subjects for listening, it's been an amazing 100 episodes of "Understanding the Assignment: The Assignment: The Podcast"

I really quickly do have an announcement to make: I will be resigning from my position as Podcast host! I know, I know, it's really sad and you're truly heartbroken and you're writing a comment about it right now, but don't worry- I will still be Your Supreme Ruler, I'm just never doing this again. It was too much.

Ok Bye :D