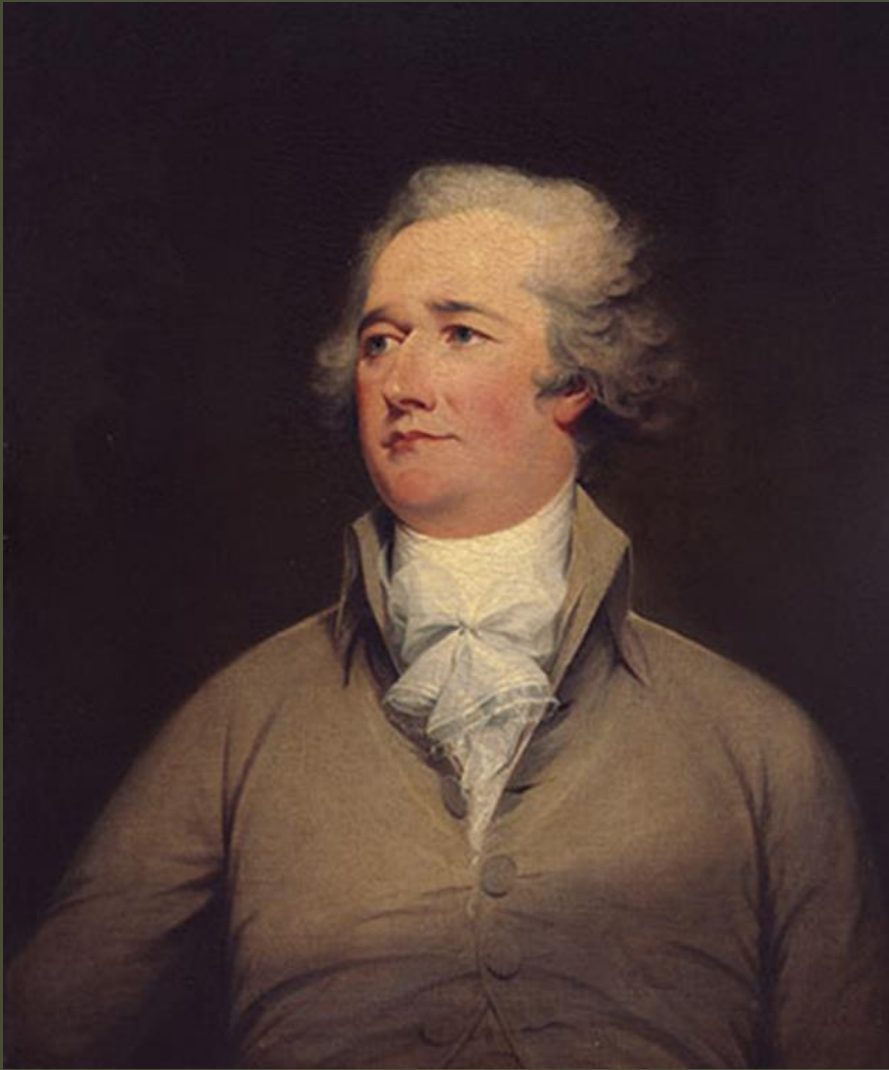


John Jay & Alexander Hamilton



John Jay was born in 1745 to a family of New York merchants. His political career began in 1774, at the age of 28, when he was elected to the Continental Congress. He went on to have a lengthy political career which included negotiating and signing the Treaty of Paris which ended the American Revolution, he served as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was appointed the first Chief Justice of the United States in 1789 by George Washington and was twice elected governor of New York.

Jay and his family moved to Bedford in 1801 when he retired at the age of 56.



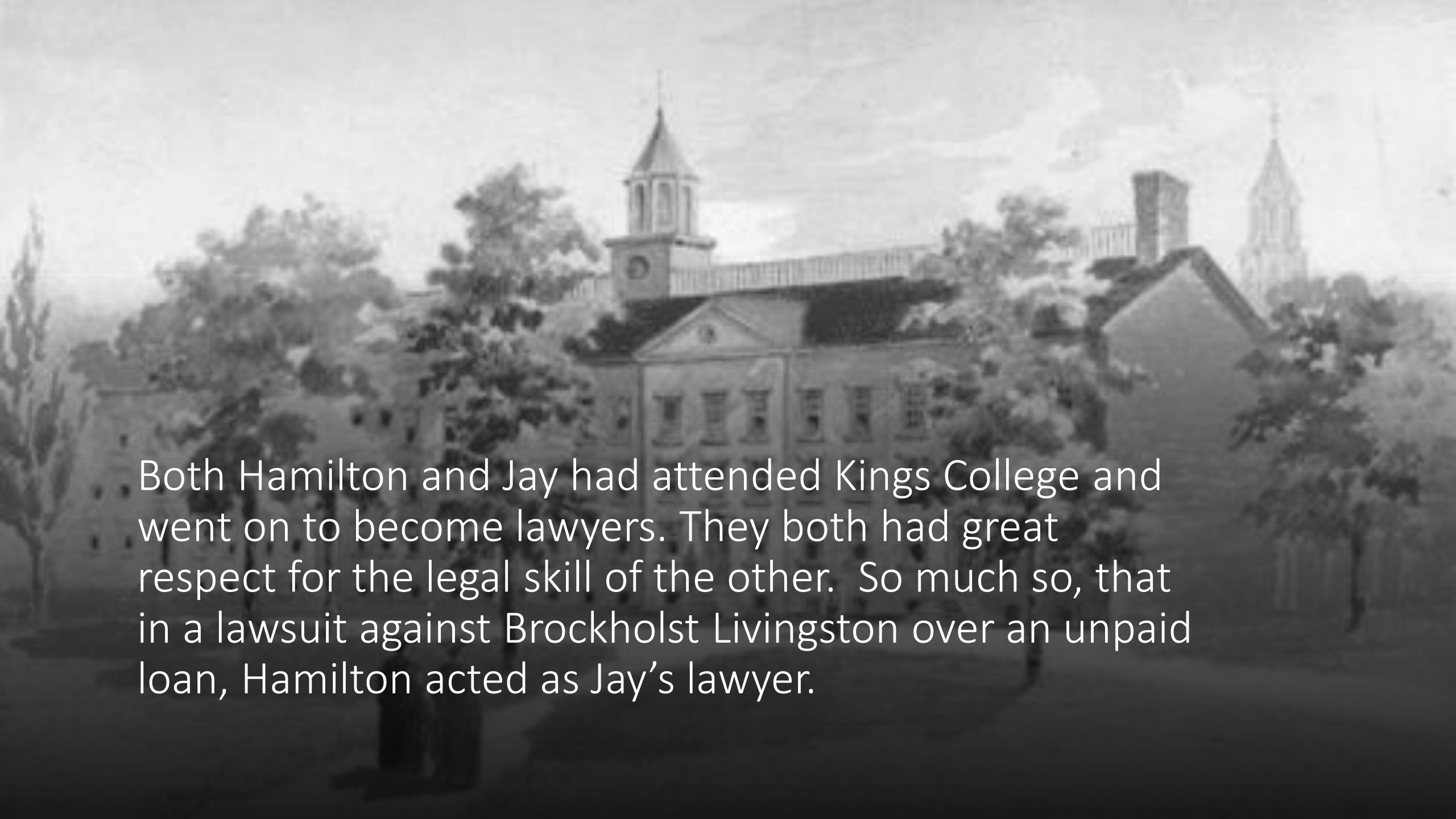
Alexander Hamilton was most likely born in 1755 on the island of Nevis, in the Caribbean. Orphaned at the age of 12 he worked as a clerk in St. Croix. At 18 he was able to book passage on a ship to Boston. Once in the colonies he headed promptly to New York.

Hamilton also had an illustrious career, he was Washington's chief aide and confidant during the American Revolution, he was the only Federalist from New York selected for the Constitutional Convention, he established the first national bank and was first Secretary of the Treasury.



Jay and Hamilton most likely first met in 1773 when Alexander was attending prep school at Elizabethtown Academy in Elizabeth, NJ. His mentor was William Livingston, the father of Jay's wife Sarah. Hamilton resided with the Livingstons for a time, so it is very likely when men first got to know each other.

Both Jay and Hamilton were part of a group of revolutionaries that hoped for peace with Britain early on. Hamilton was more vocal about his displeasure with the king. Both men would serve the country during the revolution but in different capacities, Hamilton in the army and Jay in the congress and as a diplomat.



Both Hamilton and Jay had attended Kings College and went on to become lawyers. They both had great respect for the legal skill of the other. So much so, that in a lawsuit against Brockholst Livingston over an unpaid loan, Hamilton acted as Jay's lawyer.

Jay and Hamilton were both Federalists. They both believed in the need for a strong, centralized government and felt that the government under the Articles of Confederation was severely flawed. Hamilton was chosen to be a delegate to the Constitutional Convention representing New York. The initial intent of the convention had been to revise the Articles of Confederation. Hamilton instead proposed a whole new framework of government.

The citizens of New York were divided when it came to supporting the new constitution. Hamilton devised a plan to write a series of essays to convince the voters to ratify. Jay was the first person Hamilton approached about writing *The Federalist* with him. Along with James Madison, they wrote a total of 85 essays. John Jay only wrote 5, Madison wrote 26, Hamilton wrote 51.

THE
FEDERALIST:
A COLLECTION OF
ESSAYS,
WRITTEN IN FAVOUR OF THE
NEW CONSTITUTION,
AS AGREED UPON BY THE
FEDERAL CONVENTION,
SEPTEMBER 17, 1787.

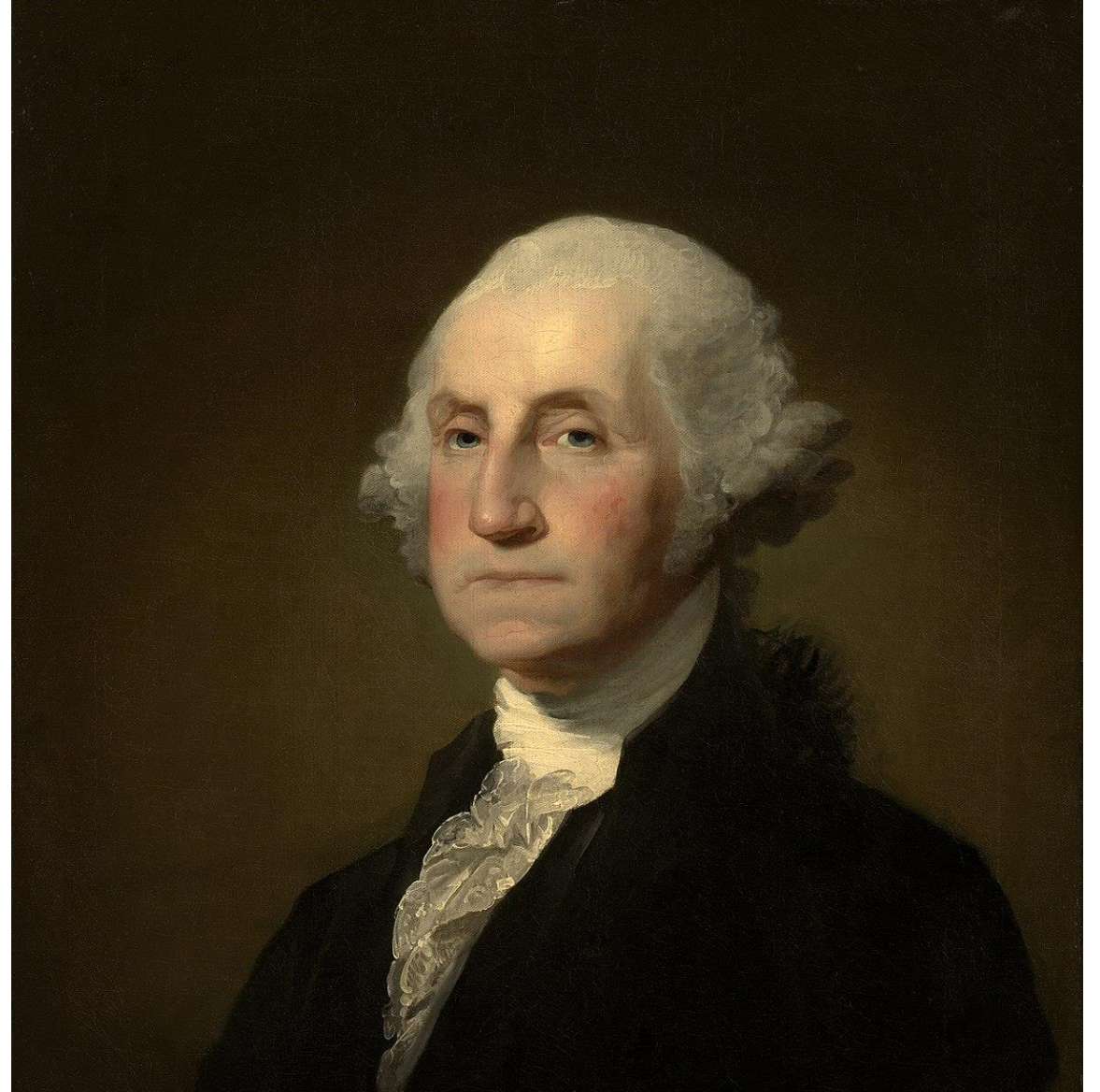
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.



“Nothing is more certain than the indispensable necessity of government; and it is equally undeniable that whenever and however it is instituted, the people must cede to it some of their natural rights, in order to vest it with requisite powers.

It is well worth consideration, therefore, whether it would conduce more to the interest of the people of America that they should, to all general purposes, be one nation, under one federal government, then that they should divide themselves into separate confederacies and give to the head of each the same kind of powers which they are advised to place in one national government.” John Jay, Federalist #2

Both men were also close with George Washington. Each had worked closely with him in the early years of the republic. When it came time for Washington to select his presidential cabinet, some speculated that Jay would be named Secretary of the Treasury, or even Secretary of State. Washington gave Jay his choice of offices and to his surprise, Jay chose the Supreme Court. As a result, this allowed Washington to appoint Hamilton Secretary of Treasury and Jefferson Secretary of State, positions that played to the strength of both men.



John Jay grew up in a slave-holding household; his father Peter owned at least a dozen slaves at a time. John was also a slave owner. It is known that he owned six in 1798. He continued to own slaves until 1817.

Hamilton was born in Nevis, and spent his childhood in St. Croix. Both Caribbean islands had a vast number of slaves to support the sugar industry. There is no evidence that Hamilton was ever a slave owner although he married into a slave owning family. There is evidence that Hamilton purchased and brokered the sale of slaves, but this was likely for his in-laws and not himself.

From early on both men shared similar views when it came to slavery. They both supported John Laureen's idea of giving slaves "freedom with their muskets." Hamilton argued that if the Continental Army did not arm the slaves and give them an incentive to fight, the British would. A resolution was proposed in congress in 1779 to grant slaves who fought in the Revolutionary War their freedom. The resolution did not pass.

Both Jay and Hamilton were founding members of the New York Manumission Society. Founded in 1785, the society's goal was to promote the abolition or manumission of slaves. Jay was the founder and first president; Hamilton was the first secretary. The society founded the African Free School to educate the children of former slaves and free blacks. It pushed for the passage of laws that prohibited the export of slaves purchased in New York.

Many of its founding members were slave owners.

In 1794 Britain was at war with France. America had established a position of neutrality. However, British ships intercepted American ships in the West Indies and captured sailors saying they were British sailors who had deserted. Britain also continued to occupy forts in the Great Lakes region, which was a violation of the Treaty of Paris. Many Americans felt a war with Britain was imminent .

Washington decided to send an envoy to London in an attempt to avoid war. Jay and Hamilton were the two leading choices to lead the group. Hamilton had great experience in dealing with matter of commerce, however Jay was more well-known abroad. Hamilton was also a divisive figure and the Republicans who were opposed to the Federalist administration found Jay more palatable.



“Mr. Jay is the only man in whose qualifications for success there would be thorough confidence and him whom alone it would be advisable to send. I think the business would have the best chance possible in his hands.”

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, April 14,
1794

TREATY
OF
Amity, Commerce, and Navigation,
BETWEEN
HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
BY THEIR PRESIDENT,
WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THEIR
SENATE.
CONDITIONALLY RATIFIED
ON THE PART OF THE
UNITED STATES,
At Philadelphia, *June 24, 1795.*

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,
A Letter from Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Hammond,
alluded to in the *seventh* Article of said
TREATY.

PHILADELPHIA,
PRINTED BY NEALE AND KAMMERER:
Sold N^o. 24, North Third Street.

Hamilton was still very much involved in the trip. He was the chief author of Jay's instructions as envoy. This in turn led to Hamilton being the primary author of the treaty. The terms of what became known as the Jay Treaty were hotly contested. Britain agreed to abandon the north-west posts and to grant the United States "favorable nation" status. The treaty severely limited the US trade with the British West Indies, and still allowed British ships to confiscate goods headed to France as long as they were paid for. Jeffersonians thought it betrayed their historic alliance with France. Federalists saw its main goal of peace as having been obtained.

THE ADDRESS OF To the People ON HIS DECLINING OF UNITED



GEN. WASHINGTON of America, THE PRESIDENCY THE STATES.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens,

THE period for the new election of a citizen to administer the Executive Government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I have been much reflected on, and have been particularly struck by the consideration, that this resolution has not been dictated by strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interests, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that this step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform evidence of the confidence in the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I

In 1796, George Washington decided he would not run for a third presidential term. He drafted a farewell address to the American people. It was believed at the time that Washington was the sole author of the address. The address was reprinted more then the Declaration of Independence and is considered one of the most important documents of the early republic.

to retire. In the discharge of this trust I will only say that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unassisted, in the conduct of the important and arduous applications, experience has only made me more and more in the eye of others, has strengthened the ties which bind me to my country, and has confirmed me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied, that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the

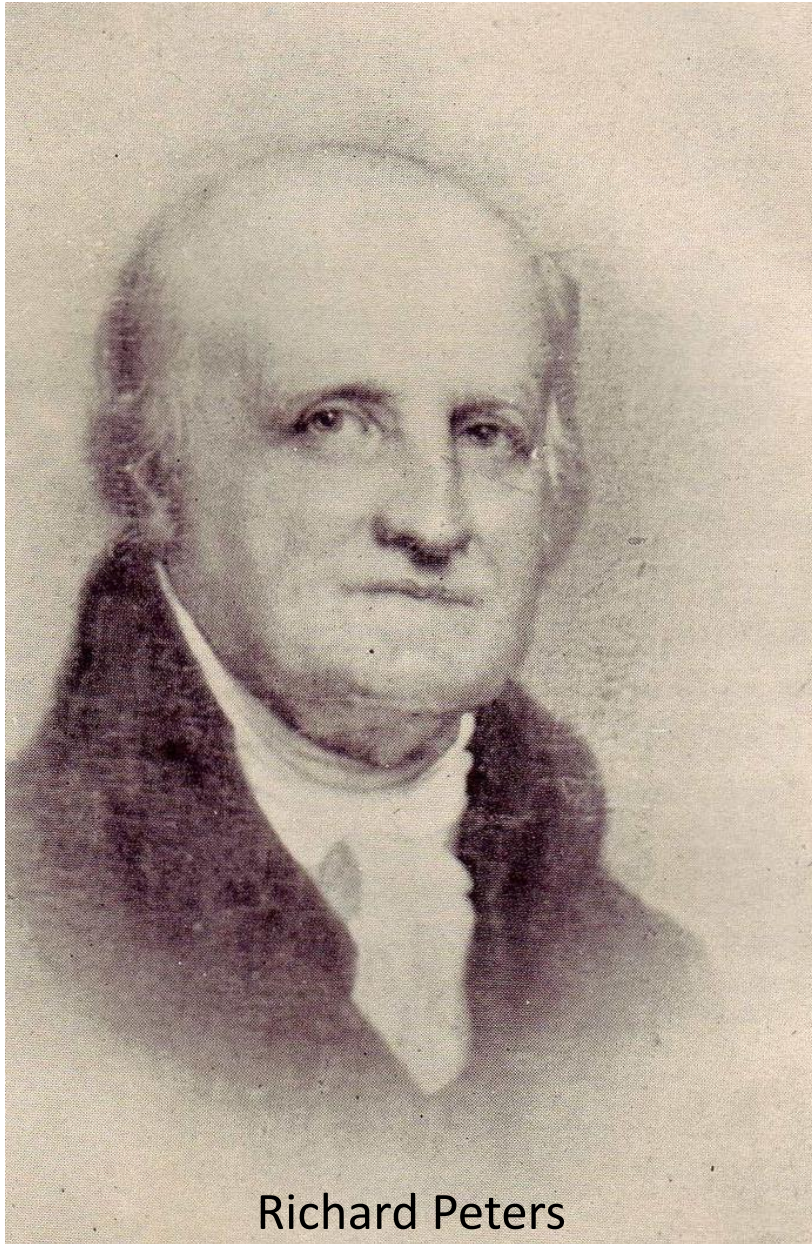
fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It excites animosity to distrust the public councils, and to defy the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one party against another; fomenting occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and the will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, with certain limits, is probably true; and in governments of a large extent, upon the spirit of party: but, in those of a small extent, it is dangerous. From their natural tendency to the abuse of power, and there being constant danger of a fire not to be quenched, and a fire not to be quenched, it should consume.

It would inspire caution in those entrusted with the powers of one department to encroach upon another; the spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, what we see in the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which is implanted in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public real against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments and has been proved by the history of them in our own country, and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance, in permanent evil, any partial or transient benefit which the use can



Richard Peters

In 1810, Nathaniel Pendelton, a New York judge and friend of Alexander Hamilton, found a copy of the address written in Hamilton's handwriting among Hamilton's papers. This find, along with Elizabeth Hamilton's claim that her husband had written the Farewell Address, led to a great controversy about the authorship.

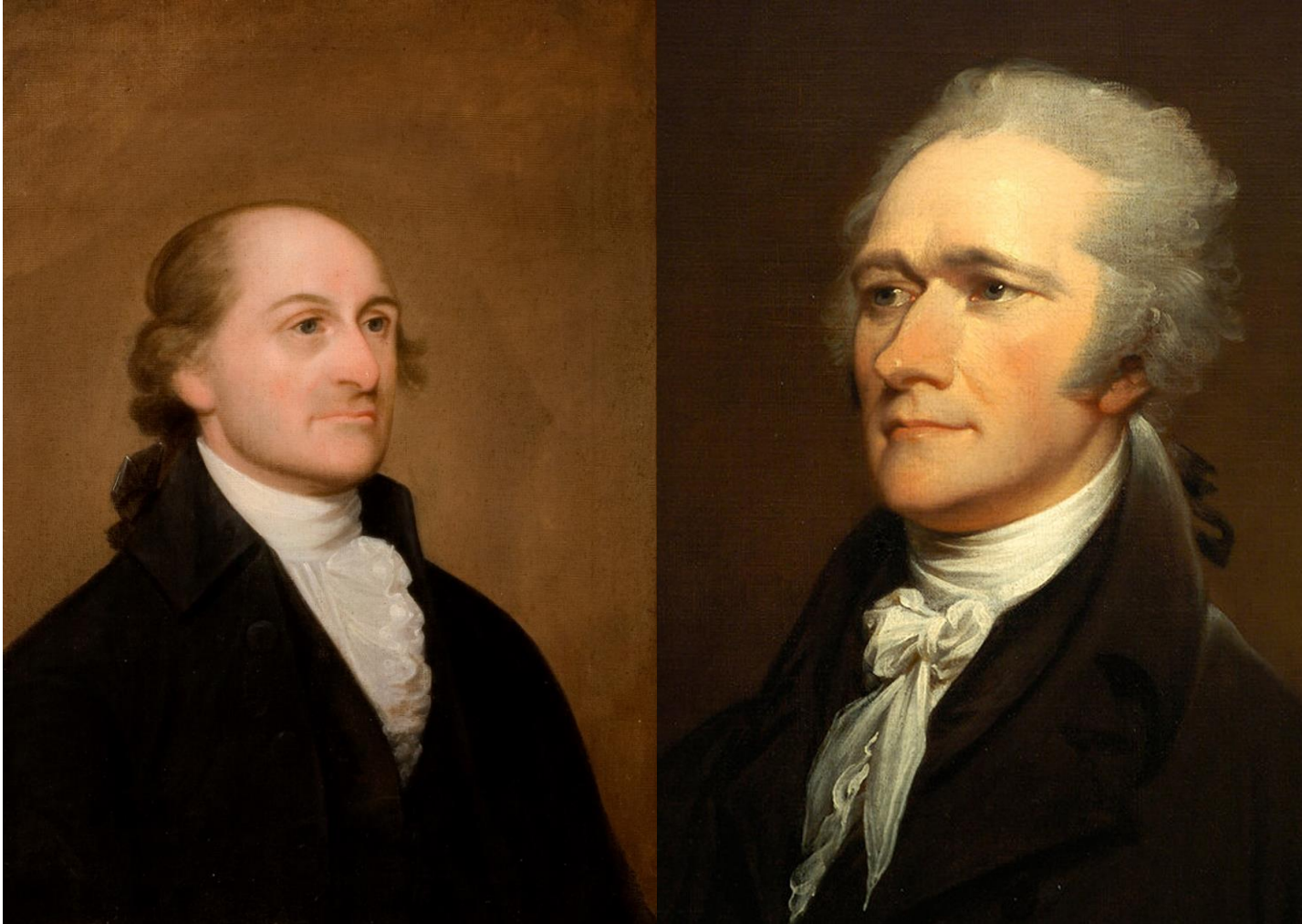
In 1811, John Jay's friend Judge Richard Peters asked for his opinion on the Farewell Address controversy. Jay did not often comment about public affairs in retirement. His response to this issue was one of the longest letters from this period, personal or otherwise.

“On more mature reflection, I became convinced that, if President Washington were alive and informed of the facts in question, he would not only authorize but also desire me to reduce it to writing; that when necessary it might be used to invalidate the imputation to which those facts give colour. I don’t consider that a disclosure is necessary at this moment, but I fear such a moment will arrive. Whether I shall then be alive, or in the capacity to give testimony, it is so uncertain that, in order to avoid the risk of either I shall now reduce it to writing.”

John Jay to Richard Peters March 29, 1811

Jay's account of the writing of Washington's Farewell Address:

He was informed by Hamilton that he had a draft of a farewell address which the president had prepared and wanted both Hamilton and Jay to offer their opinion on. Both Hamilton and Jay met, and Hamilton thought the original draft could be improved upon. Rather than mark up the original, Hamilton left Washington's draft untouched and rewrote it with his suggested corrections. Jay and Hamilton then reviewed it "paragraph by paragraph until the whole met with our mutual approbation." Jay wanted to continue examining the address, but Hamilton was anxious to return it to the president. The president received his original draft and the one edited by Hamilton and Jay and could decide which version of the address he wanted to use.



It should be noted that neither Jay nor Hamilton ever spoke publicly about the address's authorship. When asked again to recount the detail, Jay advised those inquiring to reference his letter to Judge Peters. He never commented on the issue again.

The election of 1800 was closely watched because of its potential to change the political party in power. John Adams, a Federalist, was running for reelection and was being challenged by Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr for the Democratic-Republicans.



It was speculated that in the election New England would support Adams, and the south Jefferson, and that New York could be the swing state.

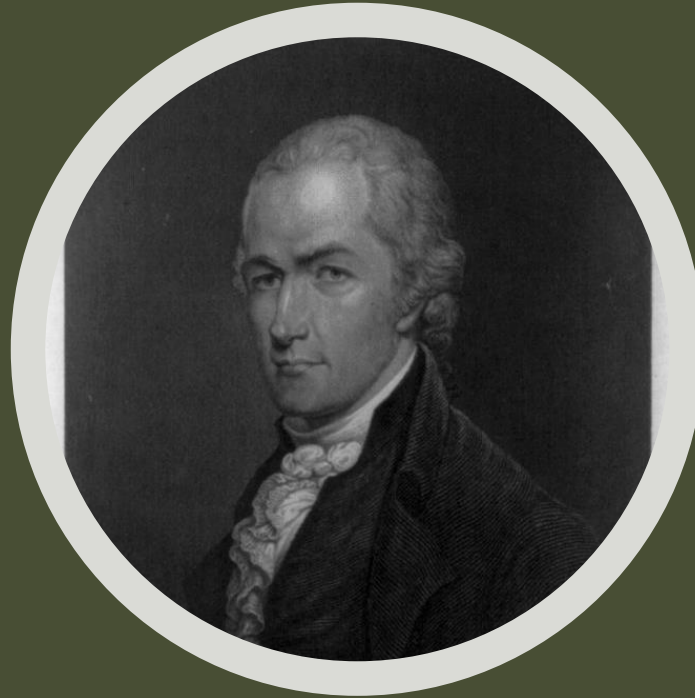
John Jay had resigned from the Supreme Court in 1795 and was serving as governor of New York during the presidential election of 1800.

When the New York State elections in April had concluded, the assembly had gone to a Republican majority. The thought was that they would then select Republican electorates, thus insuring that the presidential election went to Jefferson.

Looking for a way to prevent this, Hamilton proposed that Jay call a special session of the existing legislature which still had a Federalist majority, so that they could pass a law changing the way the state selected presidential electors.



Jay



Hamilton

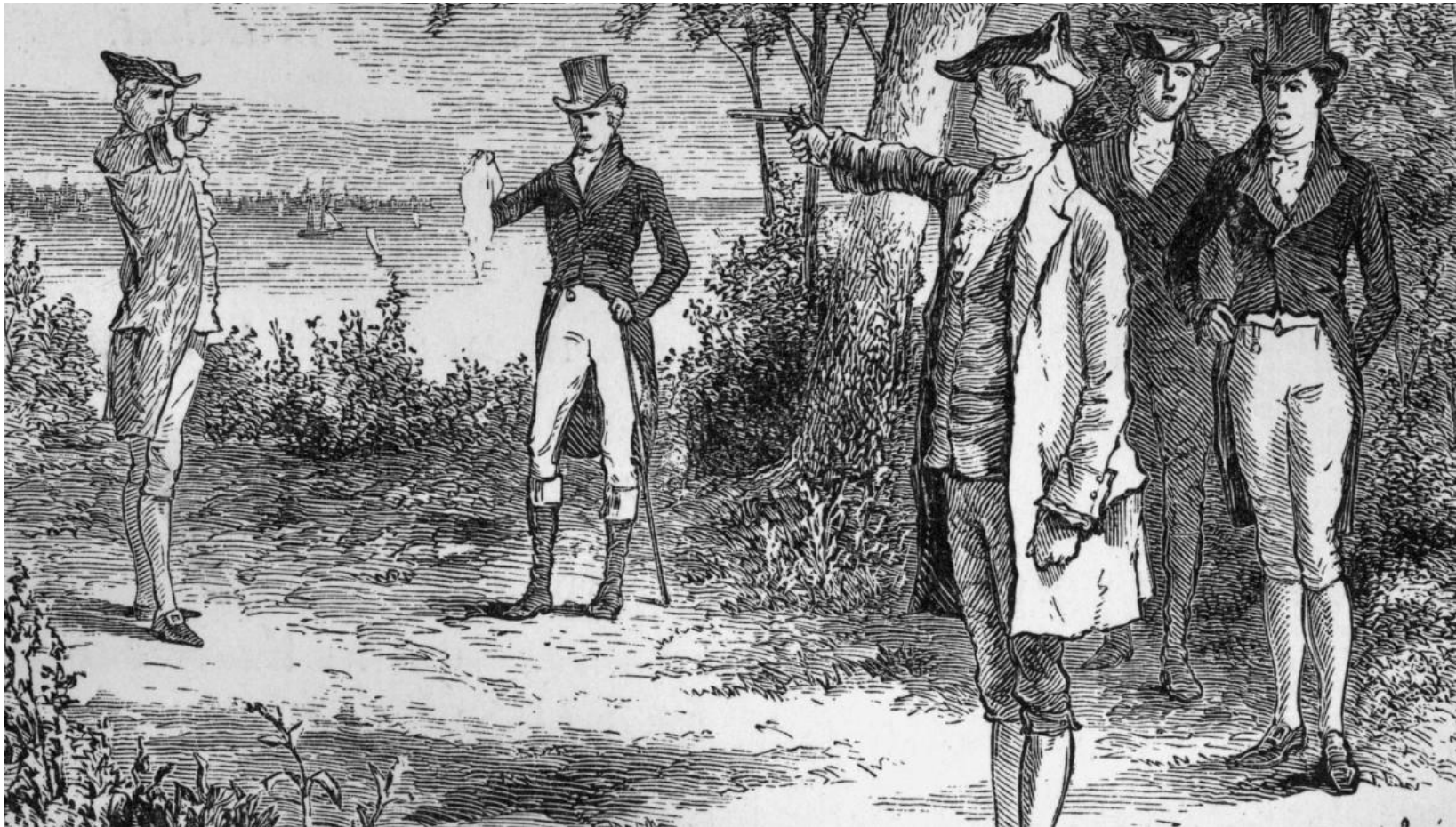


Jefferson

He suggested that New York elect electors by individual district, rather than an “all or none” vote by the legislature. Hamilton was sure this method would guarantee that Adams would receive several votes from New York electors. Hamilton also wanted this applied retroactively to the election that had been held in April. He warned John Jay that the election would make Jefferson, *“an atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics”* president if they did not take action. Jay refused the request.

Jay's only comment is found on the back of the letter from Hamilton:

“proposing a measure for party purposes which I think it would not become me to adopt.”



When Hamilton died in 1804, his friends and colleagues were shocked and saddened. Jay wrote to Phillip Schuyler (Hamilton's father-in-law and Jay's close friend) on July 25, 1804, 13 days after Alexander's death:

“The friendship and attachment which I have so long and so uniformly experienced from you will not permit me to delay expressing how deeply and sincerely I participate with you in the afflicting event which the public are now lamenting, and which you have so many domestic and particular reasons to bewail...May the Author and only Giver of consolation be and remain with you.” July 25, 1804



Gouverneur Morris

Hamilton died with a considerable amount of debt. Wanting to provide support for his widow and children, Gouverneur Morris, Alexander's close friend, organized a secret subscription service to support the Hamilton family. Naturally as a long-term friend of Hamilton's, John Jay was approached to be a subscriber to the "Hamilton Loan".

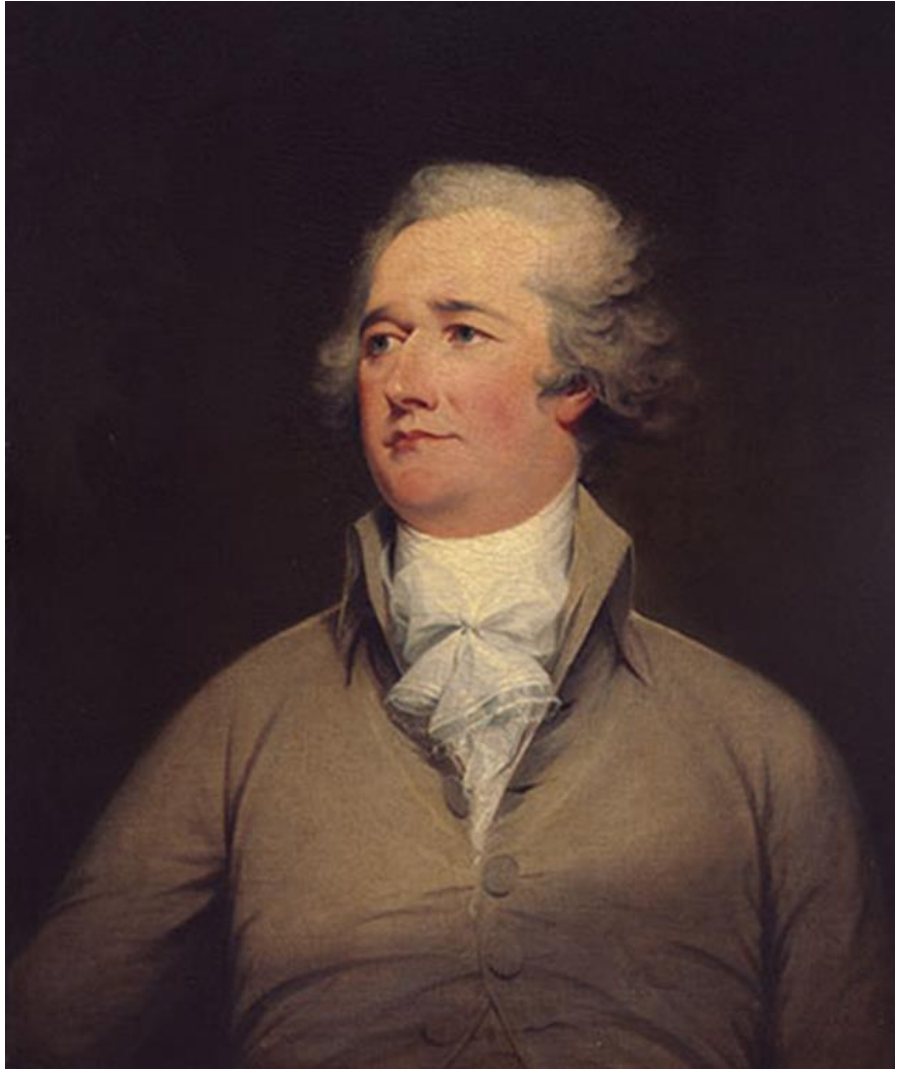
Jay declined, stating that he could not promise he would have the funds on April 1 and July 1 as the subscription required and he felt it was improper to make such a pledge when the funding was uncertain.

He asked that his reasons be communicated to his friends and Mrs. Hamilton so there would be no speculation as to why he declined.

Mrs. Hamilton was never told of Jay's reasons for abstaining because the fund was kept secret from the Hamilton family. It was not until Alexander's grandchildren's generation that the information was divulged.

Fun Fact: Elizabeth Hamilton visited the Homestead in late September 1818.





After John Jay's death, his son William Jay began to amass a collection of portraits of his political contemporaries and friends. He purchased a painting by John Trumbull of Hamilton in 1844.

It remained in the house until 1952 when it was sold to the National Gallery of Art.



The 1930 image of the ballroom shows the Hamilton hanging to the right of Jay.