

John Fenno began publishing his *Gazette of the United States* in 1789 and was an ardent supporter of George Washington, the new U.S. government in general, and especially the Federal cause as led by Alexander Hamilton. His vision for the paper was that it would be an authoritative spokesperson for the new government that would help bind the new nation together through its wide circulation, aiding the varied societies within the United States in becoming a single unified nation. Newspaper coverage during the Revolutionary era had been an immensely effective tool for resistance, agitation, and education. Now there was the possibility that it could be used as a tool of governance, but the Founders had specifically chosen not to create anything resembling a national government newspaper such as the *London Gazette*. Fenno announced that his paper would be an "auxiliary to good government" as "Men of Sense, Property, & Principle" defined it. He continually strove to show the new government in as favorable, even magnificent, a light as he possibly could. Like Vice President John Adams, he believed that a government needed "dignity and splendor" in order to be effective and keep the people in awe. Even though the newly organized paper declared that it would be independent and impartial, it was immediately apparent that he favored the centralized, finance-oriented outlook of Hamilton and others like him. Fenno did not consider that he was publishing a partisan newspaper. He thought instead that he was defending the national interest in an entirely uncontroversial manner. He stayed away from supporting candidates or reporting elections. He thought there was no reason for ongoing controversy and disagreement as the best possible government was now already in place. (Pasley, 2000).

Philip Freneau was already known as a war hero and "The Poet of the Revolutionary War" (Clark, 2015) when he was approached by James Madison speaking for Thomas Jefferson and others who were interested in creating a Republican newspaper to counteract Fenno's

increasingly Federalist positions and what Jefferson referred to as Fenno's "monarchism."

Freneau's letter to James Madison indicates the opening edition was to coincide with the Second United States Congress, and the *National Gazette* was established in 1791. (*The origins*, 2015).

Freneau was not only outspoken but insulting of policies and politicians' characters as he fought against Federalism. His editorials during and after the French Revolution so angered President Washington that he asked Jefferson to curtail Freneau. Jefferson responded that the *National Gazette* "has saved our constitution which was galloping fast into monarchy." (Goldman, 1981),

These two gazettes specifically helped shape American democracy. Battles had of course been waged in Congress and among administration officials, but the *National Gazette* gave opposition voices their first institutional form. Creation was an overtly partisan act by an administration official and directly led to the time of political party-building in the United States. For nearly the next century, no political party or faction would be viable without a newspaper or group of newspapers supporting it. (Pasley, 2000).

The two gazettes were instrumental in creating a *United States* of America in two ways. First, they continued the tradition of the importance of political speech. Second, as said by Alexis de Tocqueville, "Only a newspaper can put the same thought at the same time before a thousand readers." (Pasley, 2001, 4).

The timing of these two gazettes is significant because of the tremendous need for the newly founded American nation to unify and find its most effective path toward the future. The Revolution was past, but the long task of governing a new nation was ahead. The interaction between these two important gazettes helped frame the party system which is still in place.

## References

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