



# The Death of Alexander Hamilton

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“The Death of Alexander Hamilton” is a collection of four articles published in United States newspapers in July 1804, soon after Hamilton’s death on the 12th of that month. The 1st two articles are short new pieces describing Hamilton’s death. The third article is a letter written by Benjamin Moore, a clergyman who was with Hamilton on his death bed. Moore describes the last several hours of Hamilton’s life. The last article is an obituary.

Hamilton was a founding father of the United States, a close associate of George Washington, an architect of the US Constitution, the first Secretary of the Treasury, and a strong advocate of a strong centralized government. As a advocate of centralization, Hamilton was a founder of the Federalist Party. Hamilton’s political opponents, who included Thomas Jefferson, advocated a more decentralized system of government, with strong state powers. Jefferson and his supporters formed the Democratic-Republican Party in opposition to Hamilton’s Federalist Party.

Hamilton was born in the 1750s, out of wedlock, in the Caribbean. He came to the United States at a young age, shortly before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Soon after fighting began between the American patriots and the British, Hamilton joined the patriots in New York.

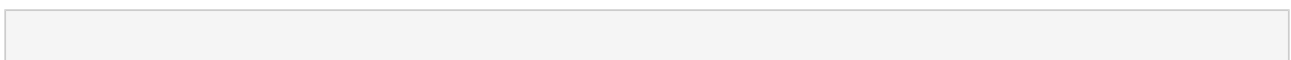
When the war ended, Hamilton helped to draft the United States Constitution. In 1789 President George Washington appointed Hamilton the first Secretary of the Treasury of the US. In this position, Hamilton organized a centralized financial system. He and other Federalists advocated a strong federal government. Jefferson, James Madison, and the other Democratic-Republicans, on the other hand, advocated states’ rights.

Hamilton played an important role in Jay’s Treaty, an agreement between the US and Great Britain. While the Republicans saw Britain as an enemy, Hamilton wanted to maintain peaceful relations so that the US could benefit from trade.

In 1804 United States Vice President Aaron Burr, who felt that Hamilton had insulted his honor, challenged the former Secretary of the Treasury to a duel. According to some accounts, Hamilton refused to fire his pistol during the duel, due to his personal convictions. Hamilton was fatally shot by Burr during the duel. Mortally wounded, Hamilton died the day after the duel. In August, about a month after Hamilton’s death, a New York Grand Jury indicted Burr on charges of being involved in a duel. Even though duels were relatively common, at the time, in Europe, they were outlawed in some US states.

The New York Grand Jury declined to lay murder charges against Burr, on the grounds that the actual duel took place in New Jersey, and was therefore outside their jurisdiction. But by November 1804, New Jersey had indicted Burr for Hamilton’s murder.

Burr avoided the duelling and murder charges by avoiding the states of New York and New Jersey, where he was at risk of being arrested. Eventually the charges in both states were dropped, and Burr was allowed to carry on his life, unscathed.



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