

ALEXANDER HAMILTON:

IMMIGRANT, PATRIOT, VISIONARY

Exhibition Guide

Developed by

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Alexander Hamilton: Immigrant, Patriot, Visionary is a national traveling exhibition developed by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (GLI), made possible by the Rockefeller Foundation. The exhibition was curated by Susan Saidenberg, Senior Curator at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Carol Berkin (Professor Emerita at Baruch College) was the scholarly advisor for this exhibition.

Format

The exhibition is composed of six retractable vinyl panels. Each panel is 81 inches tall and 33 inches wide. The exhibition requires a total of 15–18 running feet and the six panels can be displayed separately or together. Detailed setup instructions are provided to the venue's coordinator upon shipment. Setup instructions can also be found on the [FAQ page of the GLI Traveling Exhibitions website](#).

Rental Security

Exhibitions may be displayed in any open indoor areas, but preferably not in a hallway. No exhibition is to be displayed outdoors or in a tent or other temporary structure. It is preferable that a staff member is in the room with the exhibition when it is open to students or guests. If a borrower causes damage or loss of any part of the exhibition, then that institution will be responsible for paying the replacement or restoration costs. The value of the *Alexander Hamilton: Immigrant, Patriot, Visionary* exhibition is \$2,250. Some institutions choose to add a rider to their insurance policy.

Shipping

The exhibition is shipped in a wheeled, plastic case measuring 39 inches x 14 inches x 14 inches and weighing approximately 75 pounds. GLI will be responsible for arranging shipping via FedEx. A week before your loan period ends, we will provide a return label and instructions.

Reporting

Each site is required to complete a condition report upon receipt of the exhibition and again after the exhibition has been packed for return. Condition reports will be sent to the venue coordinator via email.

Questions

If you have questions, please contact

Traveling Exhibitions Program
exhibitions@gilderlehrman.org
Phone: (646) 366-9666 ext. 164

EXHIBITION CONTENT

Panel One: Alexander Hamilton: Immigrant, Patriot, Visionary

Introductory Text

Alexander Hamilton shaped the financial, political, and legal foundations of the new United States. A poor immigrant from the Caribbean, Hamilton arrived in New York as the American Revolution began. His ambition and brilliance propelled him to a leadership role in the military and in government. Hamilton was a nation builder and modern America owes much to his vision.

Alexander Hamilton on the \$10 bill (United States, Mint)

Young Hamilton

Hamilton Drawn from Life, January 11, 1773 (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-11091)

Beginnings in St. Croix

Alexander Hamilton to Edward Stevens, November 11, 1769 (Library of Congress Manuscripts Division)

“Ned, my Ambition is so prevalent that I contemn the Grov’ling condition of a Clerk or the like, to which my Fortune etc. condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, tho not my Character, to exalt my station.”

Journey to New York

John Montresor, A Plan of the City of New York & Its Environs, 1775 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLCO4315)

“View of Christiansted From Sea,” 1825 (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, HABS, VI.1 CHRIS, 13)

Panel Two: Revolutionary War Patriot

Introductory Text

The American Revolution gave Alexander Hamilton the opportunity to excel. He gave speeches and published pamphlets, fought in seven major battles, and served as aide-de-camp to General George Washington. Hamilton yearned for a field command. In 1781, Washington finally acceded to his request: Hamilton led a battalion at Yorktown, the battle that ended the war.

Alexander Hamilton as a Revolutionary War Officer (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07167.02)

“I noticed a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender . . . with a cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought.” —A Revolutionary War Veteran’s Memory of Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton to Francois, the Marquis de Barbé-Marbois, October 12, 1780 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00012)

“The want of money makes us want everything else.”

Hamilton and Washington

George Washington by Rembrandt Peale, 1853 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09119.01)

Alexander Hamilton to the Marquis de Lafayette, October 15, 1781 (Library of Congress Manuscripts Division, MSS 44693: Reel 081)

“I have the pleasure to assure you, there was not an officer nor soldier whose behaviour, if it could be particularized, would not have a claim to the warmest approbation.”

Hamilton, Hero at Yorktown

Sebastian Bauman, Plan of the Investment of New York and Gloucester, February 1782 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC01869)

Panel Three: United States Constitution

Introductory Text

Hamilton advocated a strong central government. In the summer of 1787 Hamilton represented New York at what became known as the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. On September 17, the delegates submitted their plan for a strong and flexible new form of government. In 1787 and 1788, Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison campaigned for ratification in a series of newspaper pieces. They helped convince the states to ratify the US Constitution.

“The vigor of government is essential to the security of liberty.”

—Alexander Hamilton, Federalist No. 1, October 1787

Title Page, *The Federalist: A Collection of Essays*, vol. 1, 1778 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC01551)

The Constitutional Convention

US Constitution (Printing of first draft), August 6, 1787 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00819.01)

John Lansing, Notes from the Constitutional Convention, June 18, 1787 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00819.10)

“The Supreme Legislative power of the United States of America to be vested in two distinct Bodies of Men . . . who together shall form the Legislature of the United States with power to pass all Laws whatsoever.” - Alexander Hamilton

US Constitution, printed by Dunlap & Claypole, inscribed by Benjamin Franklin to Jonathan Williams, September 1787 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC03585)

Ratifying the Constitution

James Madison by H.E. Hall and Sons, n.d. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC02538)

Chief Justice John Jay (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-95399)

Joseph Laing, “Inauguration of Gen. George Washington ... at Federal Hall, April 30, 1789” (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC04723)

Panel Four: Architect of a New Nation

Introductory Text

President Washington appointed Alexander Hamilton to be the first Treasury Secretary in 1789. In that role, Hamilton devised a means to pay off Revolutionary War debts, established the banking system, and promoted manufacturing. By the time Hamilton left the office in 1795, the United States was fiscally sound.

Alexander Hamilton by John Trumbull, 1806 (National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)

Coin, 1795 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC01999.02.02)

First Secretary of the Treasury

Alexander Hamilton, *Report ... for the support of the public credit ...*, 1790 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00960)

A plan will "promote the encreasing respectability of the American name. . . . These are the great and invaluable ends to be secured."

Anti-Slavery and Labor

Drawing in New-York African Free School Records, vol. 4, 1816 (New-York Historical Society)

"It is our duty . . . not only to regard, with Compassion, the Injustice done to those, among us, who are held as Slaves, but . . . to enable them to Share, equally with us, in that civil and religious Liberty. . . ."

Alexander Hamilton, Report of the Secretary of the Treasury ... on the subject of Manufactures, 1791 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00891)

"Manufacturing establishments [offer] . . . additional employment to classes of the community not ordinarily engaged in the business. . . . The promoting of emigration from foreign Countries. . . ."

Passaic Falls, New Jersey (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Panel Five: Public and Private Life

Introductory Text

Hamilton was a loving husband and father, and a loyal friend. But his desire to promote and protect his economic views and reputation led him to clash with leading figures of the age, including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Aaron Burr.

Engraving of Alexander Hamilton, 1835 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC04842.08.02)

Hot-Tempered Politician

Alexander Hamilton, *Observations on Certain Documents Contained in No V & VI of "The History of the United States for the Year 1796*, 1797 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC05649.01)

“My real crime,” Hamilton wrote, “is an amorous connection with his wife, for a considerable time with his privity and connivance.”

John Adams (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Divisions, LC-USZ62-21487)

Alexander Hamilton and His Family

Mrs. Alexander Hamilton by Ralph Earl 1787 (The Museum of the City of New York)

Alexander Hamilton to Elizabeth Schuyler, October 5, 1780 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00773)

“I have told you, and I told you truly that I love you too much - You engross my thoughts too intirely to allow me to think of anything else - You not only employ my mind all day; but you intrude upon my sleep - I meet you in every dream.”

The Grange, the country home built by the Hamiltons in northern Manhattan (The New York Public Library Digital Collections)

Panel Six: Hamilton-Burr Duel

Introductory Text

By 1804, the long rivalry between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr reached a climax. Hamilton had campaigned to keep Burr out of the White House in the tied election of 1800, and opposed Burr’s attempt to become governor of New York. In June 1804, Hamilton refused to apologize for insults he reportedly made at a dinner party. Unsatisfied, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel that ended the life of one of the architects of the United States.

Late Drawing of Alexander Hamilton by James Sharples, 1796 (National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)

“The patriot of incorruptible integrity. The soldier of approved valour. The statesman of consummate wisdom: whose talents and virtues will be admired by grateful posterity.”—Inscription on the monument at Hamilton’s grave captures his legacy.

The Election of 1800

Thomas Jefferson, 1801 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC05669)

Alexander Hamilton to Harrison Gray Otis, December 23, 1800 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00496.028)

“Mr. Jefferson . . . is yet a lover of liberty and will be desirous of something like orderly Government. - Mr. Burr loves nothing but himself. . . . In a choice of Evils, let them take the least - Jefferson is in every view less dangerous than Burr.”

The Duel, July 11, 1804

Aaron Burr (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-52550)

Angelica Church to Philip Schuyler, July 11, 1804 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07882)

“General Hamilton was this morning wounded by that wretch Burr but we have every reason to hope that he will recover.”

A Nation Mourns

Hamilton’s grave outside Trinity Church (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Order of March in Hamilton’s Funeral, printed in the *New-York Evening Post*, July 17, 1804 (New-York Historical Society)