

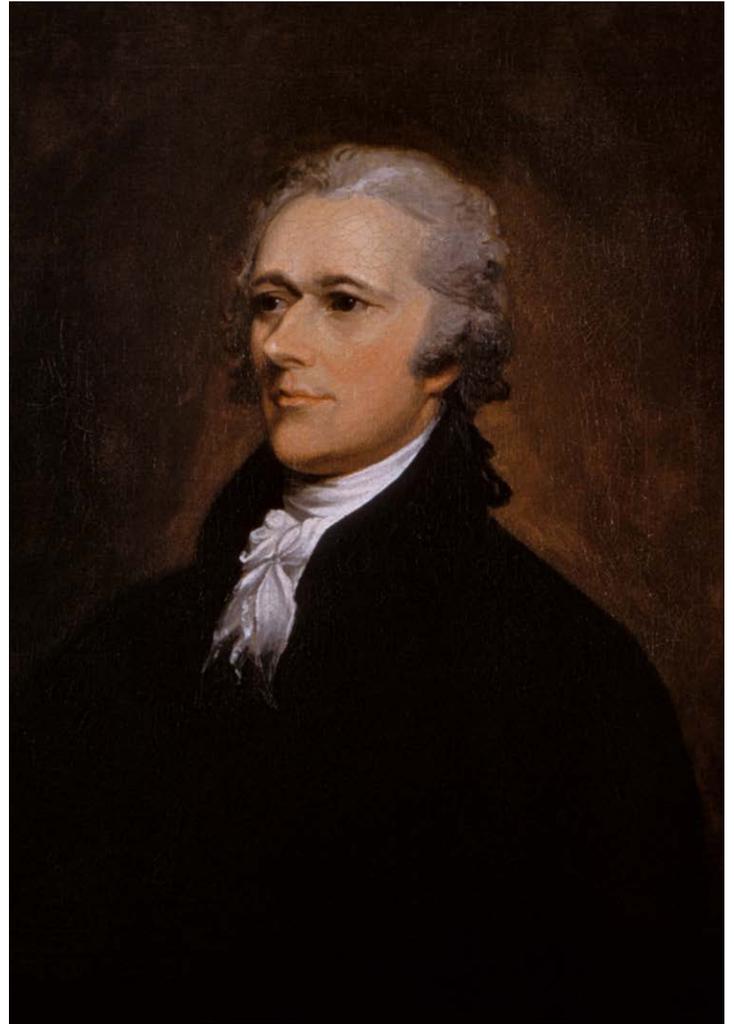
Hamilton

by *Lynne Belluscio*

I had the opportunity to go to Chicago last week to see the show "Hamilton." It was quite an experience and I certainly encourage anyone who has the opportunity - - and the money - - to see it. I had listened to the music several times, but the staging and the actors complete the story. What defies logic, is that it crams an enormous amount of history into a relatively short amount of time and the characters are Jefferson, Washington, Adams, Lafayette, Burr and of course Hamilton as well as Hamilton's wife Elizabeth and her sister Angelica. After the show on Wednesday, we still had time to catch the Cubs and White Sox game that night, so I took my grandson, Jacob and two of his friends out to the ballpark. We took a taxi and I had a chance to ask the boys what they learned about during the show. The three seventh graders picked up quite a bit. - That Hamilton was an orphan immigrant, unlike most of the other founding fathers. That Jefferson and Hamilton didn't agree on how the government should be financed. That Hamilton was involved with the Battle of Yorktown which was a critical point in the Revolution. That Washington gave Hamilton a lot of opportunities that made Burr jealous. But I shared with them a few other facts that most people don't know. Hamilton was the lawyer for Herman LeRoy and his business partners in New York City. That Herman LeRoy was the president of the Bank of New York that was founded by Hamilton. Herman LeRoy was also one of the directors of the Bank of the United States in Philadelphia. That Herman LeRoy loaned lots of money to Hamilton as well as Jefferson. And both men had a hard time paying off their debts. Herman LeRoy was William Bayard's brother-in-law (their wives were sisters) and after Hamilton was shot, he was taken to William Bayard's house, 82 Jane Street in Greenwich Village, where he died.

A few other facts: There has been speculation that Hamilton and his wife's sister Angelica Church, had more than a casual relationship. Regardless, Angelica Church's husband received a sizable piece of land in what is now Allegany County, in payment for his involvement during the Revolution. Their son Philip, and his wife came to the region and he named the town after his mother - - Angelica. Like the Wadsworths in Geneseo and the LeRoys in LeRoy, Philip Church built a huge manor house and estate.

Another twist of fate has to do with the pistols that were used in the duel between Burr and Hamilton. A while ago, Sid Barefoot lent me a copy of "The Man Who Owned the Pistols" by Helene Phelan. It is a book written in 1981 and gives the account of John Barker Church. He married Angelica Schuyler who was the sister of Alexander Hamilton's wife, Elizabeth. John grew up in England and it is believed that he had been involved with a duel before coming to America. He owned a set of dueling pistols which he purchased in 1795 or perhaps the year after. Dueling seemed to be the way to settle arguments, although it was illegal in New York. According to Phelan, James Monroe and Hamilton were at the point of dueling and Church was to be Hamilton's second. In 1799, John Church and Aaron Burr fought a duel which ended bloodlessly, and it had to do with Burr's relationship with the Holland Land Company (which was the money behind the Holland Purchase, and whose money was being handled by LeRoy and his business partners.) Burr also owned 100,000 acres of land in Allegany County and he wanted to sell it to foreign investors. It was against the law for foreign investors to own land, and it was said that Burr attempted to procure passage of a bill authorizing foreigners to hold land. Burr was accused of corruption by Church. On September 2, 1799,



Church and Burr met at Hoboken and both walked away unscathed. Church also served as a second to James Wadsworth in a duel with Oliver Kane. Philip Church was also the second to Hamilton's son, fatal duel with George Eacker. Church's pistols were used in this duel, and they would be used once more in the fatal duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. The pistols were heavy - - .455 caliber with 9 inch long barrels. Set to discharge on their regular triggers they required pressure of ten pounds. They were set on hair triggers, and would fire at a slight squeeze. The pistols remained in the Church family but eventually passed on to the Chase-Manhattan Bank - - now J.P. Morgan Chase, and are on exhibit at their bank at 277 Park Avenue, in New York City.

Another curious fact that came from a discussion I had with my daughter on the way home. Alexander Hamilton was 47 when he was killed

by Aaron Burr in 1804, but on July 4, 1776, when the Colonies declared their independence Hamilton was only 19. Thanks to the internet, we discovered that, Lafayette and James Monroe were only 18 - - these guys were teenagers! So was Herman LeRoy. Born in 1758, he was 18 when the Revolution broke out. Aaron Burr was 20. James Madison and Henry Knox were 25. Jefferson was 33 and King George III of England was 38. John Adams was 40 and Daniel Boone was 41 - the same age as Paul Revere. George Washington was 45, and it's easy to see how he felt that Lafayette and Hamilton were like sons. The old men were Sam Adams, who was 53 and Benjamin Franklin who was 70.

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