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Manuscripts and Correspondence by and about Alexander Hamilton


Autograph letter, signed, to James McHenry, June 25 1799. Call #: Case MS 6A 82, No. 2. A significant letter to the Secretary of War on the need to raise military troops and recommending James Wilkinson for promotion in the Army.

Autograph letter, signed, from James Madison to Noah Webster, October 12, 1804. Call #: Vault Ruggles 238. Madison responds to Webster’s request for details on the writing of the U.S. Constitution, specifically mentioning Hamilton’s important role in the process.

Autograph letter, signed, from John Adams to Benjamin Rush, July 7, 1805. Call #: VAULT Case MS 6A 81, No. 12. John Adams refers to “that Scottish Creole Alexander Hamilton” as one of the leaders of party politics in the early republic.

Published Writings by Alexander Hamilton

A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress… New York: James Rivington, 1774. Call #: Vault Ruggles 150 or Case F 4241 .658. Hamilton’s first publication. For the pamphlet to which Hamilton’s pamphlet responds, see Case J 5456 .802, and for other entries in the pamphlet debate see Case F 4241 .658 and Case J 5456 .8025.


The Federalist… New-York : J. and A. M’Lean, 1788. Call #: Vault Ruggles 116. The Newberry holds eight copies of the first book edition of The Federalist; Ruggles 116 was owned by Thomas Jefferson. His initials “T” and “J” are added in both volumes on pages 97 and 217 respectively.

**Letter from Alexander Hamilton, Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams…** New York: John Lang, 1800. Call #: Case E322 .H2 1800. The notorious attack on Adams which contributed to Jefferson’s victory in the 1800 election and the downfall of the Federalist party. The Newberry holds three different 1800 editions; this copy has contemporary manuscript annotations by an early reader, probably one Thomas Jackson.

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**Published Writings about Alexander Hamilton**


Report of the Committee of Claims on the Petition of Elizabeth Hamilton. Washington: A. and G. Way, 1810. Call #: Case 4A 762 no. 1. Eliza Hamilton’s first petition to Congress regarding pay owed to Alexander. For later petitions Eliza made regarding Hamilton’s governmental service and publication of his papers, see Case 4A 762 no. 2 and the *Serial Set for the 29th Congress, 1st Session, 1846*.


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**The Burr-Hamilton Duel and Dueling Practices**

Coleman, William. *A Collection of the Facts and Documents, Relative to the Death of Major-General Alexander Hamilton…* New York: I. Riley and Co., 1804. Call #: Case 4A 1428. The most thorough contemporary compilation of documents on the duel as well as eulogies, memorial orations, etc. Originally published in five parts; for an individual part, see E 5 .9 Ham-Hem. The Newberry also holds many separately published memorial sermons and orations.


Ladd, William. *A Letter to Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States of America, on the Barbarous Origin, the Criminal Nature and the Baneful Effects of Duels…* New York: Printed for the Author, 1804. Call #: Case F 057 .472. Influential example of anti-dueling responses to the duel; harsh on Burr’s role. For a later, illustrated example, see Weems, God’s Revenge Against Duelling, Case F 057 .964.

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**Aaron Burr and the Burr-Wilkinson Conspiracy**

Autograph letter unsigned, largely in cypher, from Aaron Burr to James Wilkinson, July 22, [1806]. Call #: Vault folio Graff 502. After Burr’s disgrace due to the duel with Hamilton, he was accused of conspiring to take land by force from either the United States or Spain to form a new country under his rule. This letter was one of the key pieces of evidence in his trial for treason, in which he was acquitted. The Newberry holds a large collection of manuscript and printed materials related to the Conspiracy; see Vault folio Graff 503, Vault folio Graff 4668, Vault box Ayer MS 982, Graff 506.

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This Quick Guide was created for the exhibition *Hamilton: The History Behind the Musical*, shown at the Newberry from January 11 to March 9, 2017.