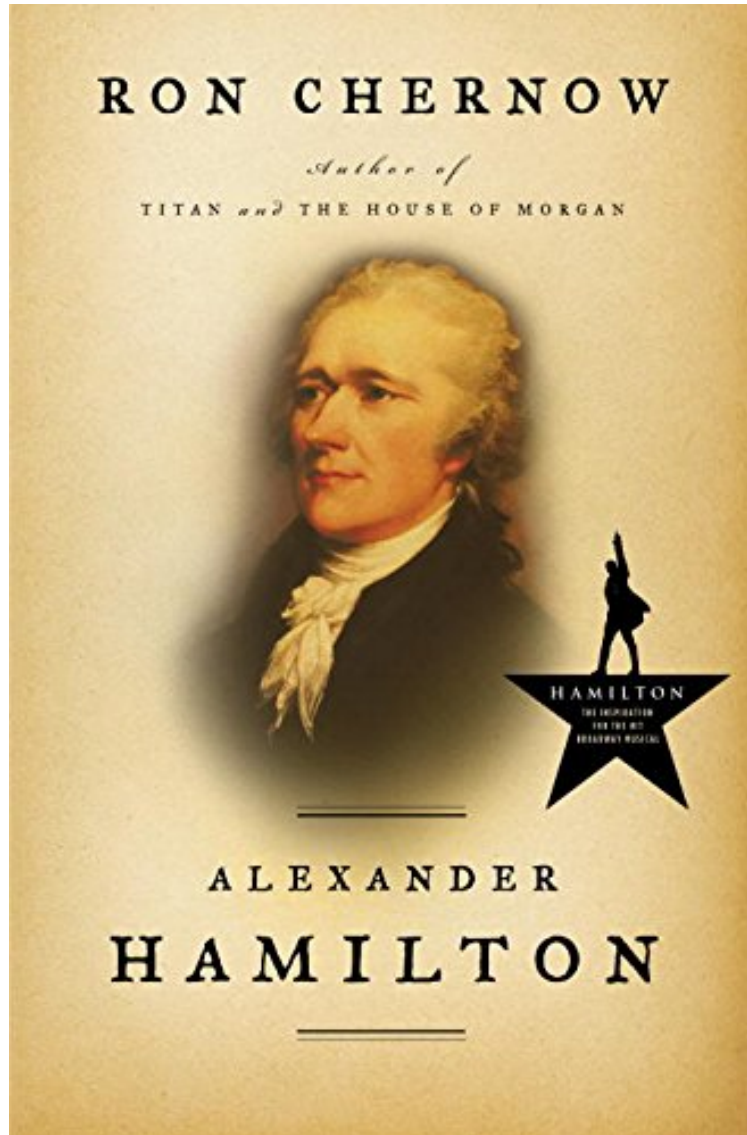


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Alexander Hamilton

Ron Chernow

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Ron Chernow : Alexander Hamilton before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alexander Hamilton:

209 of 215 people found the following review helpful. Full and well-drawn portrait of Hamilton; less so for his opponentsBy Daniel PutmanThis book is a beautifully rendered portrait of Hamilton, both his public life and his private life. As so many other reviewers have noted, the book is an example of first-rate biographical research and

most of the book is well-written. Up to chapter 16, Dr. Pangloss, the story is superbly told. But, when Thomas Jefferson enters Hamilton's life, much of the book becomes a contrast between Hamilton, who had his own well-documented personal failings, with Jefferson who, if the text is to be believed, had nothing but personal failings. Jefferson is variously described as hypocritical, duplicitous and conniving. Undoubtedly, Jefferson fits much of this description but so did Hamilton in their Federalist-Republican (anti-Federalist) feud in the 1790s. What bothered me was the unrelenting negative portrayal of Jefferson, Madison (after 1790) and John Adams. Hamilton is portrayed accurately and fully as a brilliant and decent man with some major flaws. Jefferson and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Madison and Adams, are portrayed as deeply flawed individuals who happened to have a few good points. The language reinforces this. If one were to count the negatively loaded adjectives and verbs accorded to Hamilton's three main opponents, they would vastly outnumber any positive linguistic connotations. In order to sharpen Hamilton's character portrayal, the image that Chernow gives of Hamilton's opponents is, given other biographies of these men, less than just. The name-calling, smear campaigns and character assassinations in the 1790s are appalling (but less so given the 2016 Presidential campaign). However, a dozen years after independence and only a few years after the Constitution was ratified, the fears of the anti-Federalists were real ones. Jefferson's and Madison's hypocrisy and the foibles of John Adams' personality notwithstanding, the concerns expressed were often genuine ones at that time about what kind of country the United States would be and how the Constitution should be interpreted. The possibility that the Jeffersonians may have had a point gets lost in Chernow's constant barrage of claims about duplicity, hypocrisy and malevolent intentions. So I thought this was a brilliant portrayal of the man who founded our economic and, to a large extent, our political system. The portrayal of Aaron Burr is excellent and the factors leading up to the duel are gripping. But the mid-section of the book would have been even stronger if Chernow had presented Hamilton's foes in a fuller, less negatively charged light.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Required reading!
By Patty Santry
This should be required reading for all citizens of the United States. What a pleasurable way to learn the birth and formation of our country! Even as a history major I didn't realize how short-changed Hamilton has been in the history books. It is great that Chernow's outstanding book will belatedly give Hamilton some of the recognition he has so richly deserved!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Alexander Hamilton! Get the book! Don't miss your shot!
By Karan Ogilvie
This is an amazing book! There is so much previously unknown, at least to me, history about our founding fathers and events surrounding the establishment of our country. Other than the names, none of this was ever in any history book I ever read all through school. The political climate following the war with England was not unlike some of the events we've seen in modern political cycles. Alexander Hamilton was a brilliant man, forward thinking, with the ability to see big-picture - not just for our country, but also for our country's place in the world. Most other founding fathers were far more interested in their own narrow view for the United States: Jefferson and Madison preferred an agrarian society, no manufacturing, hated banks, and insisted that slavery continue. Hamilton saw our future in balancing farming and manufacturing, with a strong banking and financial system; and he was an abolitionist.

Ron Chernow takes us through the events, fleshes out the people involved and the various relationships between all the characters. Also, as you go through the chapters of the book, you will find the events that Lin-Manuel Miranda incorporated into *Hamilton: The Musical*. I've been listening to the Original Cast Recording while reading the book. Actually, I listen to the cast recording all the time: You should get the album, too!! It's a fantastic journey. Thank you, Ron!!

The inspiration for the hit Broadway musical *Hamilton*! In the first full-length biography of Alexander Hamilton in decades, National Book Award winner Ron Chernow tells the riveting story of a man who overcame all odds to shape, inspire, and scandalize the newborn America. According to historian Joseph Ellis, Alexander Hamilton is a robust full-length portrait, in my view the best ever written, of the most brilliant, charismatic and dangerous founder of them all. Few figures in American history have been more hotly debated or more grossly misunderstood than Alexander Hamilton. Chernow's biography gives Hamilton his due and sets the record straight, deftly illustrating that the political and economic greatness of today's America is the result of Hamilton's countless sacrifices to champion ideas that were often wildly disputed during his time. To repudiate his legacy, Chernow writes, is, in many ways, to repudiate the modern world. Chernow here recounts Hamilton's turbulent life: an illegitimate, largely self-taught orphan from the Caribbean, he came out of nowhere to take America by storm, rising to become George Washington's aide-de-camp in the Continental Army, coauthoring *The Federalist Papers*, founding the Bank of New York, leading the Federalist Party, and becoming the first Treasury Secretary of the United States. Historians have long told the story of America's birth as the triumph of Jefferson's democratic ideals over the aristocratic intentions of Hamilton. Chernow presents an entirely different man, whose legendary ambitions were motivated not merely by self-interest but by passionate patriotism and a stubborn will to build the foundations of American prosperity and power. His is a Hamilton far more human than we've encountered before: from his shame about his birth to his fiery aspirations, from his intimate relationships with childhood friends to his titanic feuds with Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Monroe, and Burr, and from his highly public affair with Maria Reynolds to his loving marriage to his loyal wife Eliza. And never before has there been a more vivid account of Hamilton's famous and mysterious death in a duel with Aaron Burr in July of

1804. Chernow's biography is not just a portrait of Hamilton, but the story of America's birth seen through its most central figure. At a critical time to look back to our roots, Alexander Hamilton will remind readers of the purpose of our institutions and our heritage as Americans. Ron Chernow's new biography, *Grant*, will be published by Penguin Press in October 2017.

.com Building on biographies by Richard Brookhiser and Willard Sterne Randall, Ron Chernow's *Alexander Hamilton* provides what may be the most comprehensive modern examination of the often overlooked Founding Father. From the start, Chernow argues that Hamilton's premature death at age 49 left his record to be reinterpreted and even re-written by his more long-lived enemies, among them: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and James Monroe. Hamilton's achievements as first Secretary of the Treasury, co-author of *The Federalist Papers*, and member of the Constitutional Convention were clouded after his death by strident claims that he was an arrogant, self-serving monarchist. Chernow delves into the almost 22,000 pages of letters, manuscripts, and articles that make up Hamilton's legacy to reveal a man with a sophisticated intellect, a romantic spirit, and a late-blooming religiosity. One fault of the book, is that Chernow is so convinced of Hamilton's excellence that his narrative sometimes becomes hagiographic. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Chernow's account of the infamous duel between Hamilton and Aaron Burr in 1804. He describes Hamilton's final hours as pious, while Burr, Jefferson, and Adams achieve an almost cartoonish villainy at the news of Hamilton's passing. A defender of the union against New England secession and an opponent of slavery, Hamilton has a special appeal to modern sensibilities. Chernow argues that in contrast to Jefferson and Washington's now outmoded agrarian idealism, Hamilton was "the prophet of the capitalist revolution" and the true forebear of modern America. In his Prologue, he writes: "In all probability, Alexander Hamilton is the foremost figure in American history who never attained the presidency, yet he probably had a much deeper and more lasting impact than many who did." With *Alexander Hamilton*, this impact can now be more widely appreciated. --Patrick O'Kelley
From Publishers Weekly
After hulking works on J.P. Morgan, the Warburgs and John D. Rockefeller, what other grandee of American finance was left for Chernow's overflowing pen than the one who puts the others in the shade? Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804) created public finance in the United States. In fact, it's arguable that without Hamilton's political and financial strategic brilliance, the United States might not have survived beyond its early years. Chernow's achievement is to give us a biography commensurate with Hamilton's character, as well as the full, complex context of his unflaggingly active life. Possessing the most powerful (though not the most profound) intelligence of his gifted contemporaries, Hamilton rose from Caribbean bastardy through military service in Washington's circle to historic importance at an early age and then, in a new era of partisan politics, gradually lost his political bearings. Chernow makes fresh contributions to Hamiltoniana: no one has discovered so much about Hamilton's illegitimate origins and harrowed youth; few have been so taken by Hamilton's long-suffering, loving wife, Eliza. Yet it's hard not to cringe at some of Hamilton's hotheaded words and behavior, especially sacrificing the well-being of his family on the altar of misplaced honor. This is a fine work that captures Hamilton's life with judiciousness and verve. Illus. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist *Starred* Washington is revered as the "father of his country" and the "indispensable man." Jefferson is the "apostle of liberty," the author of our most sacred national document, and his idealism, though flawed, continues to inspire us. And Alexander Hamilton? He inspires admiration for his financial acumen and respect for his drive to rise above the genteel poverty of his youth. Yet he seldom is accorded the affection reserved for some of our national icons. But as Chernow's comprehensive and superbly written biography makes clear, Hamilton was at least as influential as any of our Founding Fathers in shaping our national institutions and political culture. He was the driving force behind the calling of the Constitutional Convention, and he was instrumental in overcoming opposition to ratification. In Washington's cabinet, he consistently promoted a national perspective while placing our economy on a sound financial footing. Chernow, who has previously written biographies of J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, acknowledges Hamilton's arrogance, his bouts of self-pity, and his penchant for cynical manipulation. But this self-made man was capable of great compassion and was consistently outraged by the institution of slavery. Although his understanding of human limitations made him suspicious of unrestrained democracy, his devotion to individual liberty did not falter. Jay Freeman
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