



Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America

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The America that Alexander Hamilton knew was largely agricultural and built on slave labor. He envisioned something else: a multi-racial, urbanized, capitalistic America with a strong central government. He believed that such an America would be a land of opportunity for the poor and the newcomers. But Hamilton's vision put him at odds with his archrivals who envisioned a pastoral America of small towns, where governments were local, states would control their own destiny, and the federal government would remain small and weak. The disputes that arose during America's first decades continued through American history to our present day. Over time, because of the systems Hamilton set up and the ideas he left, his vision won out. Here is the story that epitomizes the American dream-a poor immigrant who made good in America. In the end, Hamilton rose from poverty through his intelligence and ability and did more to shape our country than any of his contemporaries.

Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America Details

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Author : Teri Kanefield

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From Reader Review Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America for online ebook

David says

How Alexander Hamilton beat the odds in framing checks and balances into the US constitution:

This is such a readable and incisive account of one of the key founders of the Constitution of the United States, Alexander Hamilton. Writer and lawyer Teri Kanefield has done a great service in creating it!

An interesting and easy-to-read account of Hamilton's amazing life and the circumstances of diverse political interests coming together to create the United States from separate, competing states.

Alexander Hamilton played a key role.

Without his farsighted understanding and cogent advocacy, the basic framework for the modern United States may not have come together. Hamilton was both a visionary, and a practical man. He communicated extensively to educate and influence public opinion towards what he could see would create the basis for a prosperous, modern, stable nation.

Hamilton was also a man of action, working tirelessly to create the practical institutions of a new government, such as a Treasury with the ability to levy taxes and to lend money.

Interestingly, many of the dynamics of the time of founding the US are very much still active today. The divisions around creating a strong government with effective checks and balances and the views of Hamilton's opponents still resonant in political divisions today.

The swelling of populism, for example, and the distrust of experts and the government were all strong factors way back in Hamilton's time. These were factors which Hamilton often successfully confronted in his political writing and work.

For example, Hamilton, who was an immigrant to the US from the West Indies, successfully argued against constitutionally limiting the roles available for immigrants in the new government. He understood the great benefits immigrants could bring to their new country – from which everyone gained.

Do we see some of the issues still around today?

To obtain agreement he sought for compromises acceptable to enough people from diverse factions. In this case, Hamilton had to agree that the role of President would remain open only to US-born people. Other roles were available to immigrants as well as those born in the country.

In a very readable way, Teri Kanefield takes us through how Hamilton used his skill and expertise to create many key modern aspects of good government.

Read this book and you may understand a lot more about how the USA came together as a nation and what is going on in civic and political life today.

Good governance benefits a country and its people. Teri Kanefield's book highlights Alexander Hamilton's

exceptional skills and impact in creating the powerful positive framework of the Constitution which underpins USA today.

Christian says

“we are living in Hamilton’s America.” Hamilton fought for a central bank, he fought for a centralized federal government, he fought for the United States. Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America, a biography written by Tori Kanefield, is a book centered around none other than Alexander Hamilton. It starts off in 1804 in the United States of America but quickly jumps over to 1755 in the British West Indies where Alexander Hamilton was born. “His status as a child born outside of marriage – declared illegitimate... became a lifelong source of embarrassment.” Jump forward to 1774 and a young Hamilton, now in New York City, has written his first political treatise. Throughout most of the war between the Patriots and the Loyalist from 1775 to 1783, George Washington would not let Alex fight, something he longed for. It wasn’t until the Battle of Yorktown that he got the glory that he so desired. After the war, he went on to do private law work but would later except the position of Secretary of the Treasury where he would set up a strong trade and a central bank. Alexander Hamilton was also a trusted aid whom George Washington often turned to.

Alexander Hamilton was a person that didn’t seem to have much to offer considering that he was an illegitimate child, orphan, poor, and an immigrant. However, he played an influential part in creating the very government that stands here today. He faced many adversities, yet, he always excelled in what he did and proved those that doubted him wrong. For me, his story is an inspiration because no matter what, we can do what we set our minds to. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the founding of our country or simply looking to be inspired.

Carol says

I checked this out for the kids, but I couldn't resist reading it, too. It's a concise, easy to read narrative. Of course, it helps that Hamilton's life is the epitome of "stranger than fiction;" you couldn't make it up better. It's impossible to read about his life and not be impressed by his passion and dedication. His vision for America, a multiracial, merit-based, urban country, is far closer to what most people now think of as the "American Dream" than any pastoral, landed-aristocracy utopia. My one complaint is that Kanefield doesn't reign in her obvious preference for Hamilton above the other Founding Fathers; this is not an unbiased biography.

Jennifer says

I thought this biography for kids of Alexander Hamilton was good. Sometimes the writing wasn't engaging, but when discussing how to set up the treasury department, how engaging can you be? I also liked the fact that the author started off with the duel as a way to grab the reader's interest. The author does a good job of showing Hamilton's genius, yet also shows his flaws, too.

My favorite parts, though, had to be the depiction of Thomas Jefferson. Finally, a children's book that doesn't paint Jefferson as some sort of demi god. The author showed TJ's brilliance and remarked what an accomplished statesman he was, but you also got the duplicitousness, backstabbing and hypocritical part of him, too. Extra star just for that alone.

Andrew says

I thought that this was a pretty good book. It was simple and not really a hard read but it displayed good information. It told the reader about Hamilton's life from beginning, to end. It told about his life in chronological order and talked about each important event with good detail yet, it was not to long of a book. I also like that it showed small pictures yet these pictures did not fill up the book to much.

I recommend that anyone who is interested in the developing America or just Hamilton in general should read this book. Although, I don't think anyone younger than a 5th-6th grader should read this because it may be hard to understand or slightly challenging.

JoLee says

Featured in "Historical Nonfiction for Young Readers" on Intellectual Recreation.

Alexander Hamilton is having one heck of a cultural moment. Teri Kanefield begins her Making of America series with a biography of the star of the hit musical.

This book will give young fans a fuller picture of Hamilton's life. I especially appreciated the chapters on the work Hamilton did between the revolution's end and the creation of Washington's first cabinet. During this time, Hamilton served in the Continental Congress and on a delegation that met in Annapolis where Hamilton drafted a resolution calling for a convention to revise the Articles of Confederation.

Teri Kanefield's history books are very readable, and I flew through this one in a couple of days.

Review copy from NetGalley.

Richie Partington says

Richie's Picks: ALEXANDER HAMILTON: THE MAKING OF AMERICA by Teri Kanefield, Amulet, March 2017, 176p., ISBN: 978-1-4197-2578-4

“Sing a song of America
Once she was a young girl with her heart on fire
Born in the dust of the magic of history
It all goes on yeah the dream goes on”
-- Paul Kantner and Marty Balin (1986)

“During Alexander Hamilton’s lifetime, he was not seen as a visionary or an idealist--Thomas Jefferson, with his pining for an idyllic pastoral America, his penchant for revolutions, and his belief that it was possible to live in a society without taxes, was viewed as the man with the utopian vision. Hamilton was thought of as the practical statesman with a ten-point plan for everything. Thomas Jefferson was often viewed as a humanist and liberal who valued individual liberty above all, while Hamilton was often portrayed as a backward-leaning reactionary who placed law and order above individual freedom, who longed to return to a monarchy, and who embraced the evils of European industry and banking.

“But Jefferson, unlike Hamilton, could not imagine blacks and whites living side by side as equals. While Jefferson would have been happy for America to remain a nation of farmers who exchanged raw products for finished goods, Hamilton understood that an economy dependent on others would mean remaining a colony in all but name. Jefferson wanted nothing to do with banks, commerce, industry, or global leadership. Today we can see Hamilton as the farsighted statesman who imagined a capitalistic, multiracial country that would someday belong among the wealthiest and most advanced nations.”

--from the final chapter, “Legacy”

I love America. I suppose that I must have been well indoctrinated as a child, for despite all that is wanting about our country--and there is so much--I still feel fortunate to have been born and raised here.

What is greatest about this nation that’s currently governed by lying scoundrels is the genius of the U.S. Constitution. This durable document was hammered out in the days before electricity generation, cars, phones, planes, recorded music and images, TV, computers, and millions of other innovations and developments that the Founding Fathers could never have imagined. More than anyone, Alexander Hamilton was the father of this innovative governing document and, thereby, the real father of our country.

Teri Kanefield’s *ALEXANDER HAMILTON: THE MAKING OF AMERICA* is a well-researched and moving biography of the Founding Father who has never gotten his fair share of coverage. In reading about someone who died 213 years ago, it’s strange to feel a sense of loss. But that’s what I felt, quite deeply, as I reached the final chapter and read about Hamilton’s funeral, which followed his death in a duel with Vice President Aaron Burr.

It’s a powerful revelation to learn that many of the same issues that confront us in today’s America were front-and-center in our nation’s infancy. In what situations is a strong central government imperative, and when should the states act as they choose? By what formula should the populace and businesses be taxed to pay for the common good and common defense? Where does one’s personal freedom interfere with the personal freedoms of others?

And a sidebar about demagoguery rang a bit too true for me.

“Plato believed, essentially, that the problem with democracy was that anyone able to con a large enough group of people could become the ruler, a situation that encouraged and rewarded demagoguery.”

ALEXANDER HAMILTON: THE MAKING OF AMERICA is an exceptional story about the birth of the American nation. It includes fascinating and important details about the workings of the economy that are rarely encountered in history books for young people. It’s also the story of a boy born into difficult situation who worked and studied his way to become George Washington’s right-hand man and the brains behind our amazing Constitution. Because Alexander Hamilton came from extremely precarious circumstances, we root for his success and marvel at our fortune that he turned personal setbacks into positives.

Young readers will join me in enjoying the fact that everything great that Alexander Hamilton succeeded in

doing was built on a letter that he crafted and published at age sixteen. I appreciate how well Kanefield succeeds in drawing Hamilton as a damaged, very human man who, despite his flaws, positively influenced the lives of all of us who arrived in America long after he was gone.

Richie Partington, MLIS

Richie's Picks <http://richiespicks.pbworks.com>

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Wendy Garland says

Interesting subject matter but the writing did not engage me.

Zach Koenig says

When it comes to the early history of America, figures like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Adams get a lot of press (because they descended to the highest office). Heck, even Benjamin Franklin is very well-known due to his eccentric nature. While Alexander Hamilton was just as instrumental in those early years, he sometimes gets the raw end of the historical bargain, more remember for his duel with Aaron Burr than anything else. In “Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America”, however, author Teri Kanefield brings Hamilton to the forefront of the historical discussion.

In a very readable format (visually diverse; can be enjoyed by YA all the way up), Kanefield examines the key portions of Hamilton’s life and service to the United States of America, including his role in ratifying the Constitution, his hefty contribution to the famous Federalist Papers, and his time spent as the original Secretary of the Treasury (where his ideas on national banking were far ahead of their time). Of course, the infamous duel with Burr is given some ink, but it is actually plays a very small role in this text.

Besides the interesting/engaging visual style (differing text formats, side bars, photos, etc.), perhaps the hallmark of “Hamilton” is its ability to take what can be a complicated period in American History and boil it down to something easily understandable. It doesn’t take a 500+ page bio to accomplish this goal, but rather just Kanefield’s great, concise writing. It’s engaging enough to keep the pages turning, yet educational enough to learn much from the experience. I will admit that I knew very little of Hamilton’s story at the first page, but upon completion I felt like I really had a handle on his place in history.

So, I would highly recommend this book to any school classroom/library or amateur historian wanting to learn the importance of one of America’s most under-appreciated historical figures. With the musical theater production “Hamilton” winning awards left and right, this is the perfect time for more info on Alexander himself.

Kayla Eklund says

For those of you that know me, you know that I am obsessed with the Broadway musical Hamilton. I know all of the songs by heart, and have listened to them more times than I can count. My love for the musical has

led me to want to learn all that I can about Alexander Hamilton. Recently I picked up Teri Kanefield's biography of Alexander Hamilton. I thought it was an interesting portrayal.

Teri Kanefield's Alexander Hamilton is intended for a middle grade audience. Truth be told, it reminded me a lot of Ron Chernow's Alexander Hamilton, only simplified in a way that older children and preteens can understand it a lot better. I think this would be a great way to get a child who loves the musical educated on a more accurate description of what happened in Hamilton's life.

I only wish that the book would have gone into a little bit more detail on Hamilton's relationships with his friends as well. They were just briefly mentioned, and for some of them, it wasn't mentioned how he originally met them at all. Because I had already read Ron Chernow's Alexander Hamilton, I already knew a lot of the facts that were in this book. However, I did enjoy the excerpts of Hamilton's writing in the back of this book, several of which I had never read before.

I think Teri Kanefield's Alexander Hamilton is a great way for older children and preteens to learn about Alexander Hamilton's life, especially if they enjoy the musical. While I love the musical dearly, some parts of it are not an accurate representation of his life. This book works to correct those parts, and to accurately educate people about him. I will have to see if this author has written about any other historical figures I might be interested in learning more about, or teaching my nieces and nephews about.

Deborah says

I have read and reviewed two of Ms. Kanefield's books. This is the third. I enjoyed this one as much as the first two I have read. She is an excellent writer. Clear and precise, well researched and informative. The most I knew about Alexander Hamilton was the duel with Aaron Burr. Now thanks to this book I know much more about him and how our country and government was formed. To have lived at that time and watch how our country took shape, what a fascinating time it was. I will make sure that when my grandchildren start studying this part of history that I lend them this book to help learn more than just their textbooks can tell. For me it is helpful to know the man to help understand his motivations. This book helped immensely with getting to know Alexander Hamilton. A truly amazing man with clear ideas of what our country could be. I highly recommend that you read this book. It is a great tool for learning about this man and this time period in America's history. I always enjoy reading Ms. Kanefield's books. I love her writing style and the way she pulls me into the book regardless rather it is fiction or non fiction. I will continue to read Ms. Kanefield's books. Thank you Ms. Kanefield for letting me read your book.

Ethan Bennett says

Ethan Bennett-Period 2- Truth!
Genre: Historical Biography

Pages-192

Summary- In this fast paced historical biography about one of our most important founding fathers, Teri Kanefield does a great job on telling how young and aggressive Hamilton is. The book tells all about how Hamilton came from the Caribbean having nothing through his talents with poetry and writing. He works his

way up to stand next to Washington and be his right hand man. Kanefield writes how Hamilton wants to die in glory instead of write all the time. Will Hamilton get what he wants or will he be stuck in that barrier of writing?

Thoughts- I liked this book because I liked the point of view the author put Hamilton in. The pace of the book perfectly matches Hamiltons ambition to lead the new country to freedom and I believe it was very well written. A good read if you are in to Revolutionary War time biographies

Crystal says

This book put me to sleep every time I picked it up. I wanted to like it. The subject matter was interesting but the writing style did not keep me engaged.

Autumn says

I like how this biography started out with a bit of a mystery for young readers, something to think about as they read. This was a good biography, not too dry. I was fascinated by things I didn't know but kids might find some of the details on nation-building boring.

Becky says

First sentence: On a mild summer morning just after dawn, two men met on the dueling grounds in Weehawken, New Jersey.

Premise/plot: Teri Kanefield has written a biography of Alexander Hamilton for children. (I'd say the intended audience was the eight to twelve age group.) In a way, the book is both a biography of a man, Alexander Hamilton, and a nation, the newly formed United States of America. How did Alexander Hamilton help shape America? What legacy did he leave behind him? Are his ideas still impacting and influencing our nation and our politics today?

My thoughts: I love HAMILTON. I would recommend this one to any fan of the musical. It is well-written and researched, and the pacing is great. It's a quick read. Books like this one give nonfiction a good reputation. Where were books like this when I was a kid?!?!
