

Prologue

Pg 2: A visitor remembered that Eliza looking at a painting of Alexander, gazing “as if she could never be satisfied.”

Eliza became obsessed with preserving Hamilton’s legacy and saving it from all the defamatory comments that Jefferson, Adams and others enemies were always spreading. She enlisted around 30 assistants to sift through all his stacks of papers (“thousands of pages of writings”). It was such an exhaustive effort that person after person either abandoned the project or died before completing it. Eliza died at 97 years old before it was finally completed.

Pg. 5: “Hamilton was an exuberant genius who performed at a fiendish pace and must have produced the maximum number of words that a human being can scratch out in forty-nine years.”

In addition to his tremendous achievements as treasury secretary he also had just a few other noteworthy accomplishments to speak of: clerk, college student, youthful poet, essayist, artillery captain, wartime adjutant to Washington, battlefield hero, congressman, abolitionist, Bank of New York founder, state assemblyman, member of the Constitutional Convention and the New York Ratifying Convention, orator, lawyer, polemicist, educator, patron saint of the New York Evening Post, foreign policy theorist and major general in the army. Pivotal force in 4 consecutive presidential elections. NBD

Chapter 1: The Castaways (not starring Tom Hanks)

Born in Nevis in the British West Indies.

- Hamilton was always embarrassed by his origins. Both his maternal and paternal sides were always stuck in the middle of the class system between the wealthy plantation owners and the slaves
- “My birth is the subject of most humiliating criticism”

Maternal grandfather: John Faucette “a French Huguenot who emigrated to the West Indies”

Maternal grandmother: A British woman named Mary Uppington

- When they married they already had two children. In total they ended up having 7 children. Alexander Hamilton’s mother, Rachel being the youngest. After several devastating epidemics, 5 of her siblings died in childhood leaving just her and her much older sister Ann as survivors.
- Mythology has it that Rachel was partly black which would have led to Alexander being partially mixed race as well. However, there is no factual evidence to support this theory. It’s derived from the fact that at the time of her birth, the slave population outnumbered whites by a ratio of 4:1 and relations between them were quite common.
- John and Mary’s marriage was not a happy one and they eventually agreed to “live separately and apart for the rest of their lives”. When John died, he had left all his property to Rachel and thus she became a hot commodity.

- Rachel was then introduced to a Danish man named Johann Michael Levien. A peddler of household goods with aspirations of climbing upward. It is possible his last name is a variation of Levine and he concealed his Jewish heritage as religious intermingling was as frowned up as interracial.
- She ended up marrying him in concordance with her mother's wishes, not her own. It was another dreadful marriage.
- They had 1 son, Peter. Her only "legitimate" child.
- Lavien continued to squander her money and fall further into debt and Rachel eventually abandoned the house. This enraged her husband so much that he accused her of adultery and indecent behaviour which according to a Danish law was grounds for having her imprisoned. She spent months being locked up in a cramped cell and survived off of a nauseating diet including salted herring and mushy cornmeal

Cousin did commit suicide, but according to the book - he either stabbed or shot himself to death. In the show, the choreo shows he hanged himself.

Ham's childhood was as bad as you thought, but worse.

Divorce decree in the paper, Rachel thrown in jail.

Ham something pretended his parents were married. He was always faking it or trying to seem like something he wasn't.

James Hamilton peaced out when he was 10, because he thought the kids were old enough to take care of their mom. James wasn't able to. No money, was never successful.

After James Hamilton left, Alexander moved in with Thomas Stevens and his wife. Well-respected merchant. Thomas's son Edward, was a year younger than Ham and they became BFF's. They also really, really looked a like and had a bond stronger than Alex and the brother he grew up with. So Chernow speculates that maybe this Thomas person is really Ham's dad.

Chernow says if this is the case, it could explain a few things:

- 1) it gives weight to the claim that Rachel was sleeping around
- 2) it explains why Thomas Stevens and his family took Hamilton in so willingly in the first place - and not his brother.
- 3) That's maybe why he never felt close to his so called brother and father, because Ham was known to be insanely loyal.