New York, NY--The first major exhibition on Alexander Hamilton, opening at the New-York Historical Society on September 10, 2004, will reveal Hamilton’s under-appreciated yet pivotal role as the visionary and pragmatic Founding Father who, perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, shaped America as a nation and Americans as a people. *Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America* brings Hamilton to life as the chief architect of the financial and political policies that have made America the diverse society and global power that it is today.

The exhibition will explore how Hamilton’s Dickensian early life informed his world view and, in turn, the economic and political strategies he put in place. Born out of wedlock and orphaned at the age of 10, Hamilton immigrated to this country from the Caribbean island of St. Croix at age 15. He emerged as George Washington’s trusted aide within five years, and our nation’s first Secretary of the Treasury by age 32. Hamilton’s groundbreaking economic strategies not only saved the country at the moment of its founding from a staggering debt, but enabled America to become the greatest economic force in the history of mankind.

Moving beyond the sanitized myths of America’s Founding Fathers, the exhibition will present the political infighting, media character assassination, sex scandal and propaganda campaigns between Hamilton and his contemporaries—including Jefferson, Madison and Adams—that largely resulted in the suppression of Hamilton’s true legacy for 200 years.

The exhibition will illuminate Hamilton’s role as:

- the force behind the ratification of the Constitution
- the founder of the Bank of the United States and the Bank of New York
- a brilliant legal mind and pioneer of the judicial review process
- a battlefield and military hero
- a financial genius who created the framework for America’s enduring economic prosperity
- an ardent opponent of slavery and a founding member of the New York Manumission Society
- an innovative publisher and hard-hitting journalist who founded the *New York Post*
Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America will draw together an unprecedented array of more than 150 original documents, letters, paintings and artifacts—including the pistols from his duel with Vice President Aaron Burr—many of which have not previously been publicly displayed. Hamilton and his world will be brought to life through a dramatic installation designed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, which will fill the entire first floor of the New-York Historical Society. The exhibition will remain on view through February 28, 2005.

Other original documents, artifacts and works of art include:

- A rare copy of the Declaration of Independence printed in Boston in July 1776 to spread the news of America’s independence
- Benjamin Franklin’s signed, personal copy of the Constitution of the United States
- The Federalist Papers
- The letters between Hamilton and Burr that led to their duel
- More than 30 portraits of leading figures from the founding era, including portraits of Jefferson and Washington by Rembrandt Peale
- Minutes from the New York Manumission Society, long-forgotten records that remain unpublished to this day
- Hamilton’s handwritten drafts for sections of Washington’s Farewell Address, which he ghostwrote for Washington
- The New York Evening Post (Nov. 24, 1801) article on the death of his 19-year-old son Philip Hamilton, who was killed in a duel with the same pistols that Hamilton would use in his fatal duel three years later

The exhibition has been organized by Richard Brookhiser, historian and author of Alexander Hamilton, American; James Basker, President of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; and Mina Rieur Weiner, Guest Curator, New-York Historical Society.

“More than any of his peers, Hamilton shaped and prefigured the America we live now live in,” stated Mr. Brookhiser. “When you cash a paycheck or vote for President; follow the war against terrorism or criticize the government; read a newspaper or sit next to someone of a different race on a subway, you are doing something that he foresaw and helped make happen.”

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“Alexander Hamilton was a lawyer, a financial wizard, a journalist, a political power broker and a man who fought for a diverse society. Both brilliant and contentious, he is the original New Yorker who led a life fit for the tabloids,” added Mr. Basker. “While a number of notable books have shed new light on his achievements, this exhibition will make this remarkable man—who is seen by millions every day on the $10 bill—real in a way that is exciting and accessible to everyone.”

**Special Programs and Publications**

The Historical Society will be mounting a series of special programs in coordination with the exhibition. These include:

- *Alexander Hamilton, American* by **Richard Brookhiser** (Free Press, 1999) is being reissued with 32 pages of images of artifacts and documents from the exhibition.

- A 23-minute film on Hamilton, produced by **Ric Burns**, will be part of the exhibition’s educational programming, and selections from the film will be included in interactive kiosks in the exhibition.

- The New-York Historical Society is producing a special web site in collaboration with **WNED/13**. The web site will supplement the exhibition and include more than 50 unpublished manuscripts and a **teacher’s guide**.

- The Historical Society will be presenting a series of lectures and moderated discussions throughout the run of the exhibition. **Ron Chernow**, author of *Alexander Hamilton* (The Penguin Press, 2004), will be featured in the first event this fall.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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