

A New Light on the Presidency: Hamilton's New York City

by Anton Chaitkin

March 29—Alexander Hamilton lived and died for America's exceptionally beautiful mission, the uplift of the population from poverty and backwardness, and the global success of peaceful modern conditions.

To avoid a catastrophe in today's crisis of war and economic insanity, the next United States President,—who must replace the criminal Obama now, because we can't wait for a 2017 inauguration,—will require extraordinary qualifications possessed by only a few past Presidents: the determination to resume America's founding mission; the courage to face down the enemy oligarchy that has put us in the present danger, in a fight for the new policy that will ensure our future safety and happiness. This report will look back at how Alexander Hamilton's leadership resulted in the greatness of New York City, and in national progress and power. Just as our very best Presidents have taken guidance from Hamilton, this New York story will be particularly instructive now, on the ideas and attitudes needed from our next President.



Alexander Hamilton, painting by John Trumbull (1806).

Two opposite and incompatible visions of the New World's future have clashed ever since the Renaissance sent Columbus here in 1492.

The patriots of the nation-in-the-making, typified by Massachusetts' Cotton Mather, Virginia's Alexander Spotswood and Pennsylvania's Benjamin Franklin, worked for a rapidly growing productive society encouraging creativity in its citizens, with harmony between European settlers and people of other races and cultures.

The Anglo-Dutch monarchy and the imperial London financiers, however, looked to America as a limited-population outpost for looted raw materials, with African slaves and perpetual race war between whites and indigenous peoples.

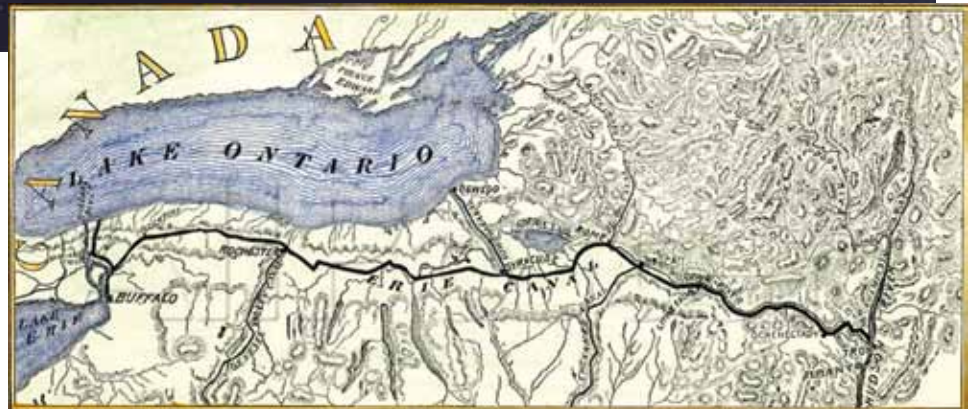
This fundamental conflict in motives extended also to New Amsterdam, the original Dutch colony on Manhattan Island. There in the mid-1600s, the republican statesman Adriaen van der Donck led a settlers' rebellion against the tyranny of the ruling Dutch West India Company; seeking self-government, industry, and agriculture instead of the empire's genocidal black slave trade and the mutual suicide of white-provoked wars with the Indians. (See Russell Shorto's valuable 2004 history, *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America*.) The two sides had fought to a standoff by 1664, when the British grabbed control of the Dutch lands from Long Island to Albany.

The 17-year-old Alexander Hamilton emigrated to North America in 1772. As a New York college student two years later, he began taking a leading role in the revolt against the British empire. He soon became the aide-de-camp to General George Washington, commander of the Revolutionary army, and served as Washington's trusted liaison with our French ally.

British forces occupied New York in 1776. Most of the patriotic residents had already fled, while Crown loyalists were flooding into the city, creating what was



Construction of a canal from the Hudson River to Lake Erie was the passionate cause of Hamilton and his allies, while forces allied to traitor Aaron Burr led the opposition to it. The map shows the Erie Canal as of 1840; the painting, by Anthony Imbert, shows a celebration in New York of the Erie Canal in 1825, when the waters of the Atlantic first mixed with those of Lake Erie.



to be a persisting base for imperial subversion in the new country.

The losing British army surrendered the town in 1783. Hamilton immediately returned, and argued for a strong national government that could take the new USA entirely outside the imperial system.

Hamilton, assisted by his fellow Revolutionary of-ficers, founded the Bank of New York in 1784. That private bank worked with the later Hamilton-led Bank of the United States to protect national finances and useful commercial markets from malicious speculators. The staff and operations of the Bank of New York were closely associated with France’s consul in New York, Jean de Crève-cour, and with projected French invest-ments in the Northwest (Ohio) Territory for developing towns and production by American settlers.

In 1785 Hamilton joined John Jay in creating the New York Manumission Society, aiming to abolish slavery in the state. Hamilton was the real soul of the

national anti-slavery movement, being opposed to all racial discrimination, and fiercely determined to re-place the imperial cheap-labor system with national economics that properly values and elevates human labor. Following Hamilton’s lead, New York State en-acted gradual emancipation of slaves in 1799.

From 1785 through 1788, Hamilton spearheaded the drive for a Federal Union under a national Constitu-tion. When he successfully led the states’ ratification of that Constitution, which promised to promote the gen-eral welfare, working people in New York City paraded in honor of Hamilton, their defender and champion.

New York was the nation’s first capital at the outset of the Federal Government. There, as President Wash-ington’s Treasury Secretary, Hamilton began devising America’s founding program of productive Federal credit, protective tariffs, and infrastructure-building, to fulfill the faith of those working people in the Revolu-tion they had won.

Southern slaveowners were frightened by the bloody Caribbean slave revolt beginning in 1791. British influence operated through their continuing neo-colonial trade. The slaveowners' principal political representative, Thomas Jefferson, attacked the nationalist program—in betrayal of the 1776 Independence Declaration he himself had drafted.

While President Washington and Hamilton stuck with the program, Aaron Burr, a cynical devotee of British imperial philosophy, with close family connections to the entire British covert operations apparatus in America, attached himself to Jefferson's war on Hamilton. Burr became the master of a powerful, anti-national, statewide New York political machine.

Infrastructure, or Race War?

A few months after Treasury Secretary Hamilton issued his world-famous 1791 *Report on Manufactures*, the nation's plan to transform itself into an industrial power, Hamilton's own family began a pioneering initiative to reverse the backwardness imposed by British colonial policy.

Hamilton's father-in-law, Revolutionary General Philip Schuyler, in 1792 founded the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company that commenced the survey work and preliminary construction on a canal to connect, for the first time, the Atlantic Ocean with America's midwestern Great Lakes. The projected waterway from the Hudson River to Lake Erie had been urged, and the route personally surveyed, by President Washington. It became the passionate cause of Alexander Hamilton and his allies. Aaron Burr meanwhile quietly organized British and Dutch imperial ownership of huge land tracts in upstate New York, all around the projected canal route, a frontier territory susceptible of provoked white-Indian conflicts. Burr-allied political forces would later marshal the opposition to the proposed New York State completion of the Erie Canal begun by Schuyler.

In 1793 Treasury Secretary Hamilton and his companions from the Revolutionary War—men who had worked closely with the Oneida and other Indians on the American side—founded the Hamilton-Oneida Academy, attended by both white and Indian youth. The Erie Canal would pass near the site of the school (later called Hamilton College) in Oneida County.

Pioneer farmers and townsmen were then settling with easy terms on land in adjoining Otsego County being developed by Judge William Cooper, founder of

Cooperstown and father of the future novelist James Fenimore Cooper. Alexander Hamilton was the elder Cooper's political sponsor, and his lawyer against the claims of the Prevost family to take away the Cooper lands. Attorney Aaron Burr opposed Hamilton for the Prevosts, the family of British intelligence and crown military leaders into which Burr had married.

It was in this era that the young DeWitt Clinton parted from the anti-nationalist politics of his uncle, New York Governor George Clinton, and adopted Hamilton's nation-building as his own life's work. In 1794 Dewitt Clinton told the state legislature, "Great Improvements must take place which far surpass the momentum of power that a single nation can produce, but will with facility proceed from their united strength. The hand of art will change the face of the universe. Mountains, deserts, and oceans will feel its mighty force. It will not be debated whether hills shall be prostrated; but whether the Alps and the Andes shall be leveled; nor whether sterile fields shall be fertilized, but whether the deserts of Africa shall feel the power of cultivation; nor whether rivers shall be joined, but whether the Caspian shall see the Mediterranean, and the waves of the Pacific leave the Atlantic."

West Point and National Development

Out of the cabinet after 1795, Hamilton worked on the improvement of U.S. military defenses, and industrial capabilities, as a single strategic object. In 1798 he became a major general, ranking just below the commander, General George Washington, the former President.

Hamilton wrote on November 23, 1799 to Secretary of War James McHenry with a detailed plan for a national military academy based at West Point, New York, for McHenry to try to put through Congress. The proposed institution was to train a competent professional officer corps for a relatively small standing army. Its most crucial and unique projected capability should be civil engineering, useful for civilian as well as military works.

Hamilton suggested five divisions of the academy, "The Fundamental School" and schools of Engineers and Artillerists, Cavalry, Infantry, and Navy.

Curriculum for the Fundamental School was to include "... algebra, geometry, the laws of motion, mechanics, geography, topography, and surveying, designing of structures and landscapes, and the principles of tactics."

The Engineers and Artillerists were to be taught “fluxions (calculus), conic sections, hydraulics, hydrostatics, and pneumatics . . . gunnery . . . Fortifications . . . Chemistry, especially mineralogy. . . . The fabrication of cannon and other arms. . . . The principles of construction, with particular reference to aqueducts, canals, and bridges. . . . The composition of artificial fires.”

George Washington died 20 days after this plan was written, and Hamilton was elevated to become the nation’s senior army officer.

Congress finally authorized the Military Academy in 1802, as a school to train Army engineers. Joseph Gardner Swift was the Academy’s first official graduate, who later returned as Superintendent during the War of 1812 and was a leading light among New York’s nationalists, Hamilton’s heirs.

General Swift wrote in his memoirs, that in October 1802, he and the first Superintendent, Col. Jonathan Williams, traveled together to Albany and met “General Hamilton . . . [who] invited me to dine with him at his father-in-law’s—General Philip Schuyler’s. After dinner, among the subjects of conversation was the canal and improved navigation of the Mohawk [River, intermediate between the Hudson and Lake Erie]. . . . It was graphically described by General Schuyler. . . . He regretted that the locks were too small, and the Mohawk unmanageable. He spoke of the object of the tour of Washington in 1789 to be, among other enquiries, to learn what improvements could be made to connect the Hudson and the lakes. . . . The following day General Hamilton, Colonel Williams and General Schuyler discussed the subject of the Military Academy, the colonel giving his ideas and purposes to encourage an enlargement of the present plan; General Hamilton approved. . . .”

Swift then described the formation, a month later, of a kind of grand council whose members could press for national development. Nine officers met at the Academy “for the purpose of forming a *Military Philosophical Society*, to promote military science and history. This society soon embraced as members nearly every distinguished gentleman in the navy and Union, and several in Europe. Its funds were invested in New York city [bonds].” The West Point-affiliated Military Philosophical Society would include DeWitt Clinton (New York’s Mayor and Governor), future President John Quincy Adams, and inventor Robert Fulton.

After its official 1813 closing, the Society was continued informally by General Swift and a group of New

York’s military and industrial planners in the circle of Washington Irving, the New York historian and famed classical writer. Swift and his colleagues established (ca. 1817) the West Point Foundry, across the Hudson from the Academy. The Foundry produced about one-third of all U.S. artillery up through the Civil War. It produced steam engines; America’s first iron ship (the cutter *Spencer*); the engine for the first American locomotive, *Best Friend*; the locomotives *DeWitt Clinton* and *West Point*; metal fittings for the Erie Canal locks; and cast-iron piping for the New York City water system.

Treason in New York

We will now consider how the nation’s enemies, at war with Alexander Hamilton, built a nest, an imperial enclave that came to be known by the general title, “Wall Street;” how Hamilton saved the Union and the state of New York within it; how his projects blossomed after his martyrdom, and his vision made New York the world’s greatest city.

Wall Street mythologists explain that financial district as evolving out of the little group of speculators that met under a buttonwood tree in 1792 and started the Stock Exchange. In reality, the Buttonwood Group originally came together in shock, as a counter-reaction in view of Treasury Secretary Hamilton’s intervention against what he called “bancomania,” the wild speculation against government’s credit mechanisms. The group and the exchange they formed had in fact little influence during the 1790s, as Hamilton stabilized government paper, bottling up insider-trading and other criminal financial behavior.

It was rather an infamous 1799 crime against New York City, a gigantic fraud by Aaron Burr, that led in time to the Wall Street institutions that have looted the economy and steered U.S. policy to suicide.

At the beginning of 1799, Alexander Hamilton proposed to the city’s Common Council a plan for a water company, jointly owned by the City and private investors, to clean up New York’s stagnant, disease-producing pools, build sewers, and bring clean water from the Bronx River. Aaron Burr pretended to side with Hamilton and wrote up the proposal in a bill for the state Assembly, of which Burr was then a member. Making the water company entirely private, he inserted a small, unnoticed clause allowing the company to use “surplus” funds in any “monied transactions . . . for the sole benefit of the said company.” When the bill for the com-

pany was enacted, Burr immediately used the state charter to set up not a water company but a deposit-taking private bank.

The scandal stank so badly that Burr lost his seat in the Assembly that Spring.

Hamilton's partner and brother-in-law John B. Church began discussing publicly Burr's history of corruption as a foreign agent. When Burr's new Bank of Manhattan opened in September, Burr challenged Church to a duel and Church shot him harmlessly.

From then until the elections of 1800, Burr took tens of thousands from the Bank for himself. He took uncountable funds for successfully organizing candidates for the legislature, who chose the state's electors in favor of the ticket of Jefferson for President and Burr himself for Vice President. When the Presidential electoral vote was tied between Jefferson and Burr, and the choice fell to Congress, Vice President-nominee Burr betrayed the ticket and tried to get himself chosen as President in place of Jefferson. Hamilton famously stepped in and convinced the necessary margin of Congressmen of the Burr danger, and they installed Jefferson.

In the next few years, DeWitt Clinton created a New York political machine that was to make him New York's longtime mayor and later the state governor. Clinton's forces now clashed with the Burr machine, which was publicly disgraced but fabulously well-connected. Clinton exposed U.S. Vice President Burr as a criminal would-be dictator; Burr henchman John Swartout challenged him to a duel in 1802, and Clinton shot and wounded Swartout.

In 1804, Burr schemed with British-affiliated members of the anti-Jefferson Federalist Party that if they successfully backed him for Governor of New York, he would take New York, along with the New England states, out of the Union.

Hamilton again stepped in, exposed Burr, ruined his secession plot and ended his political career. Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel and shot him dead. Burr later schemed for the secession of the Western states, was acquitted in a treason trial, and exiled himself to England. He conferred with the British war cabinet before returning quietly to New York.

New York Triumphs

Hamilton, his partners, and his political successors were at length successful in their fight for infrastructure, which was to make the bright fortune of New York

City and State.

In 1807, Mayor DeWitt Clinton created a commission to plan for a city on a grand scale, that could have modern living conditions for its citizens, and appointed Hamilton's great friend Gouverneur Morris as its chairman. The commission's plan set up a grid for the entire Manhattan Island, long before the land was occupied, but *in anticipation of the vast scale of enterprises and employment that must surely follow the building of the Erie Canal, in the next generation!* On this plan the wild terrain was then *leveled* into a giant grid for orderly settlement, with numbered streets and long, straight avenues. This triumph of man over nature began to fulfill Clinton's 1794 prophecy that "The hand of art will change the face of the universe."

Also in 1807, inventor Robert Fulton made the world's first demonstration of a successful commercial steamboat, on the Hudson River. In the previous decade, when Hamilton's family was launching the Erie Canal project, they had also stipended Robert Fulton as a promoter and potential builder of such plans. Fulton had written a substantial report proposing the canal-intensive development of the United States and all nations.

Fulton distinguished his public infrastructure plan from the genocidal practices of the British builders in India and Africa. In response, Hamilton's brother-in-law and partner, John B. Church, gave Fulton 500 English pounds sterling and committed another £1,000 for later. Thus funded, Fulton went on to establish a global reputation as an engineer and national planner.

Thus in 1807, the team of Mayor Clinton, with his accomplices Gouverneur Morris and Robert Fulton, was in place to begin an all-out crusade to build the Erie Canal. It was to be the biggest canal work in the world, on the scale of Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert's old Languedoc Canal in France, and those of the ancient Egyptians. President Jefferson scorned the project; the next President, James Madison, rejected Federal support. So Clinton organized mass rallies and 100,000 New Yorkers signed his petition, aiming for New York State funding.

Opposition arose from the usual suspects.

Aaron Burr slunk back from Britain in 1812. He set up a New York law practice in partnership with Martin Van Buren, Burr's old protégé from the murderous war on Hamilton. Van Buren revived Burr's statewide political machine, without Burr's hated public face, to be called first the Bucktails, and later, the Albany Regency.

The Burr-Van Buren forces initially opposed the

Canal project when it was pending in the legislature, then reversed course when public opinion crushed their interference. But the enemy's attempts to stop the canal by personally destroying DeWitt Clinton, continued almost to the triumphant day in 1825 when the waters of the Atlantic first mixed with those of the inland Lakes.

During this fight, Van Buren created, on Burr's plan, a new anti-national party allying New York bankers with southern slaveowners, to be called, shamelessly, the Democratic Party. It aimed at reversing the whole American people's trend at that time, north and south, towards nationalist economics and great transport projects.

Even before the great New York canal was completed, now-governor DeWitt Clinton reached out to get a national network of infrastructure quickly into place. Clinton put Ohio's Governor Ethan Allen Brown into action to start up canals connecting the Ohio River with the Hudson-Lake Erie linkup. Governor Brown had studied law in the office of Alexander Hamilton from 1797 to 1802, so he had already experienced, from the inside, the fateful war the nationalists were fighting.

John Quincy Adams, President from 1825 to 1829, put Federal resources into Midwest canal-building. The resultant canal system, connecting productive farms in the interior with East Coast cities and the port of New York, suddenly and sharply changed North America's "natural" economic geography. It magnified and enriched human enterprises in the interests of all classes of Americans, making New York the giant of manufacturing and world commerce.

President John Quincy Adams also began assigning serving and furloughed Army engineer-officers, trained at West Point under Hamilton's plan, to plan and design the routes for the nation's first railroads. William Seward, New York's governor from 1839 to 1842, eagerly emulating Clinton and Adams, built the Erie Railroad with state funds. Though that railroad, and indeed the control of New York, later fell into the hands of Wall Street plunderers, the physical fact of this breakthrough, the combined canal-railway transport system, transformed everything. Seward also completed Clinton's work of launching a real public school system, contributing mightily to New York's greatness.

American Presidents and the Two New Yorks

The Burr-Van Buren sabotage prevailed with the 1828 Presidential election of Andrew Jackson. Hamil-

ton's revived program was again killed off; the government was stripped of its powers. Van Buren succeeded Jackson in the White House, bringing on a thunderous economic crash. In the vacuum, a triumvirate of Wall Street, Southern slaveowners, and their London partners now ruled supreme. Cotton was exported to England in exchange for British manufactures, enriching the slave power's broker, Wall Street.

During the Civil War which cured us of the slavery disease, President Abraham Lincoln defied Wall Street's financial blackmail of the Union. He revived Hamilton yet again with the transcontinental railroad, with protective tariffs, and greenbacks for vast productive investment—for industry and agriculture on a scale unprecedented in all history.

The British clawed back in the 1870s, setting up their new Wall Street "viceroys," Rockefeller and Morgan. The old nationalists hung on, backing Thomas Edison over Morgan's sabotage until American-born electricity generation was astonishingly put into place across the world.

But by the end of the 1920s, the London-Wall Street axis had buried the American Revolutionary idea, had sponsored the growth of fascism in Europe and Asia, and had shattered the global economy in the Great Depression. Franklin Roosevelt came to the Presidency primed for the political war to rescue mankind from this feudal-imperial enemy system. FDR made friends everywhere for the revived Hamiltonian America. He started the United Nations and put its headquarters in America's greatest city, to cement the deal.

President John F. Kennedy went back to FDR, back to Hamilton and the Revolutionary founders, befriend- ing anti-colonial Third World nationalists, pushing global nuclear power, electrification, industrialization, and a joint Russian-American deep space program.

The enemy axis hoped that JFK's murder would kill Hamilton and the American Revolution forever. In that spirit, the pistols Aaron Burr used to kill Hamilton are now on permanent exhibition in the Executive Conference Room, 277 Park Avenue, New York office of JPMorgan Chase bank; the display highlights Burr's founding of their predecessor bank, the Bank of Manhattan.

Our next President must be qualified to know that these murderers did not create New York, nor did they build America's former greatness. In the present danger and world crisis, when America issues the summons, Hamilton's spirit is ready to serve.