Spring 2018

The Hamilton Effect: How One Musical Made the Founding Fathers Cool, and What it Means for Historic Sites and the Academic World

Charlotte Skala

University of New Hampshire, Durham, cs2009@wildcats.unh.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/honors

Part of the American Popular Culture Commons, and the Public History Commons

Recommended Citation


https://scholars.unh.edu/honors/435

This Senior Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses and Capstones by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.
The Hamilton Effect: How One Musical Made the Founding Fathers Cool, and What it Means for Historic Sites and the Academic World

Abstract
This paper chronologically examines academic opinions about Hamilton: an American Musical and analyzes visitor attendance at historical sites to determine if Hamilton affected the numbers.

Keywords

Subject Categories
American Popular Culture | Public History
The *Hamilton* Effect: 

How One Musical Made the Founding Fathers Cool, 
and What it Means for Historic Sites and the 
Academic World 

Charlotte Skala 

Defense: May 8\textsuperscript{th}, 2018 

Committee 

Professor Jessica Lepler 

Professor David Richman 

Professor Eliga Gould
# Table of Contents

List of Figures .......................... 2  
Acknowledgements ...................... 3  

## Introduction .......................... 4  
- Summary of *Hamilton: an American Musical* .............. 5  
- Summary of Thesis .......................... 10  

### Chapter One: Historical Inaccuracies and Academic Opinions of *Hamilton* 11  
- First Reviews, August 2015 – February 2016 .............. 12  
- Lyra D. Monteiro and the Critical Review .................. 15  
- Responses to Monteiro with the National Council of Public History .............. 17  
- The Public Notices the Academic Debate .............. 21  
- Monteiro’s Last Critique of *Hamilton* .............. 24  
- Critique by the Society for Historians for the Early American Republic .............. 26  
- SHEAR Roundtable Audience Questions .............. 33  
- The Last Critiques .......................... 38  
- Conclusion .......................... 43  

### Chapter Two: Historic Sites and *Hamilton* 45  
- Independence National Historic Park .............. 46  
- Adams National Historic Park .......................... 49  
- Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site .............. 50  
- Valley Forge National Historic Park .............. 53  
- Schuylers-Hamilton House .......................... 54  
- Morristown National Historic Park .............. 55  
- Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello .............. 56  
- Hamilton Grange National Memorial .............. 58  
- Morris-Jumel Mansion .......................... 60  
- James Madison’s Montpelier .............. 61  
- Benjamin Franklin House, London .............. 63  
- George Washington’s Mount Vernon .............. 63  
- Colonial National Historic Park – Yorktown Battlefield .............. 65  
- Fraunce’s Tavern-Museum .......................... 65  
- Federal Hall National Memorial .............. 66  
- Conclusion .......................... 68  

## Conclusion: Scholars and Sites 70  

## Appendix Historic Sites Statistical Data 72  

## Bibliography 79
List of Figures

Figure 1: Independence Hall Recreational Visitors vs. Year 47
Figure 2: Adams National Historic Park Recreational Visitors vs Year 49
Figure 3: Valley Forge National Historic Park Recreational Visitors vs Year 53
Figure 4: Morristown Historic Park Recreational Visitors vs Year 55
Figure 5: Hamilton Grange National Memorial Recreational Visitors vs Year 58
Figure 6: Colonial National Historic Park Recreational Visitors vs Year 65
Figure 7: Federal Hall National Memorial Recreational Visitors vs Year 67
I have a lot of people to thank for the creation of my thesis, so I will start with Professor Jessica Lepler, who has been by my side throughout the entire process. Professor Lepler’s excellent advice, incisive edits, and sense of humor were amazingly helpful, and I cannot say thank you enough. I would also like to thank the museum staff I interviewed, because without their cooperation and friendliness I would not have a second chapter of my thesis. Many thanks also go to Catherine Kelly, Tamara Gaskell, Marla Miller, and Sarah Case for their insight on the publishing process. Thank you to Meng Zhao and the UNH Statistics department for showing me how to use the JMP software, and my gratitude to Kurk Dorsey, Julie Simpson, and Melissa McGee for getting my data through the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB # 6942). I would also like to thank my committee for reading all 20,000 plus words of my thesis. Professor Jessica Lepler, Professor David Richman, Professor Eliga Gould, you guys are real troopers! I also can’t forget Professor Elizabeth Mellyn, who arranged the 2018 Undergraduate Research Conference and allowed me to present my research at it. I would be remiss if I did not thank Lin-Manuel Miranda for writing Hamilton and reigniting my passion for history, but my biggest thank you goes to my family and friends. Thanks for putting up with my Hamilton obsession and for reading drafts of my paper. I couldn’t have done it without you.
Introduction

Outside of Albany New York lies a relatively unknown historic site called Schuyler Mansion. Schuyler Mansion’s claim to fame was being the home of Revolutionary War hero General Philip Schuyler, however the General was not that famous. Schuyler Mansion only began to see more visitors when people realized Schuyler’s daughter, Elizabeth, married Alexander Hamilton. Before people made the connection via Hamilton: an American Musical, the site received on average 4,000 to 5,000 visitors per year. After Hamilton opened, the site saw 10,000 to 11,000 visitors a year, and these new visitors were drastically different from the history buffs who had visited before. The new visitors were younger, ranging in age from elementary to college age, and they often arrived with historical facts about the Hamilton and Schuyler families derived from the musical. Yet the knowledge provided in Hamilton was not historically accurate. Hamilton claimed the Schuyler family had three children, Angelica, Elizabeth, and Peggy (Margarita), when in reality the Schuyler family had over fifteen children, with eight surviving to adulthood. Hamilton fans also learned that the Schuyler family openly owned enslaved African-Americans to perform housework, childcare, and other manual labor. Reeducating Hamilton fans about the realities of history was a task that has been undertaken by historic homes, but also by academics. This paper will attempt to examine how the public was exposed to the true history of Hamilton, first by analyzing academic responses to the musical, and then determining how visitor attendance changed at sites related to the musical.

---

1 Heidi Hill, phone interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018.
2 Heidi Hill, phone interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018.
The first step is defining who qualifies as an academic. In this study, academics are defined as professional historians who hold (or held) a professorial position at a university or college. These academic responses were then collected from *Hamilton*’s release date at the Public Theatre in February of 2015 to December 2017 and analyzed chronologically. A different time frame was used for the historic site research because *Hamilton* reached more of the public when it debuted on Broadway. Therefore, the dates for historic sites were set from August 2015 to December 2017. With the dates set, the historic sites were interviewed about visitor attendance and if any of their guests were interested in *Hamilton*. These dates also formed the parameters for the statistical analysis of visitor attendance. By comparing the visitor numbers before and after *Hamilton* was released on Broadway, it was possible to quantitatively prove if historic sites were affected by the musical. The analysis also helped to determine if *Hamilton* fans sought out Hamilton information at historic sites.

**Summary of *Hamilton: an American Musical***

In order to understand the responses of academics and historic sites, we must first understand what historical information *Hamilton: an American Musical* provides. The almost three hour show covers Alexander Hamilton’s life from birth to death, and begins with an opening number that briefly covers Hamilton’s life in the Caribbean. The show then moves to 1776 in New York City, where Hamilton seeks out Aaron Burr. Burr takes Hamilton to a tavern and introduces him to John Laurens, Hercules Mulligan, and the Marquis de Lafayette, where

---

3 Non-historian responses to *Hamilton* were also included if published in a reputable historical publication. See History @ Work Series with National Council of Public History
they quickly embrace Hamilton as a fellow revolutionary patriot. The audience is then introduced
to the Schuyler sisters, Angelica, Eliza, and Peggy. All three are beautiful single daughters of the
wealthy Philip Schuyler, and they are searching for a husband who will be their intellectual
equal. The scene then shifts to loyalist Samuel Seabury, who is arguing with Hamilton about the
possibility of revolution. The two are cut off by a messenger from King George the III, who has
sent 32,000 troops to the city to quell the revolutionaries. Hamilton decides to join the
continental army under the command of George Washington, but the British forces overwhelm
Washington and he suffers a series of humiliating defeats. After the battle, Burr introduces
himself to Washington and tries to give Washington advice on how to lead the troops, which
Washington does not appreciate. Washington prefers Hamilton, and having heard of Hamilton’s
military reputation, Washington offers Hamilton a position as his right hand man. Hamilton
accepts, and recruits Lafayette, Laurens, and Mulligan into the army. The musical then jumps to
a military ball in 1780, where Hamilton is introduced to Elizabeth Schuyler by Angelica
Schuyler, her older sister. Elizabeth and Hamilton quickly hit it off and fall in love, and within a
few weeks the two are married. At the wedding, Angelica gives a toast to the newlywed couple,
and flashbacks to when Hamilton and Eliza first met. The flashback reveals Angelica also fell in
love with Hamilton, but introduced him to Eliza, as Angelica was supposed to marry a wealthy
man. After the wedding, Hamilton, Burr, Laurens, Mulligan, and Lafayette share a drink with
Burr, who reveals he is romantically involved with the wife of a British officer. Hamilton
encourages Burr to openly court the woman, but Burr insists he will wait until the time is right.
Burr then reflects on how Hamilton seizes opportunities, whereas Burr is willing to wait for the
correct opportunity to come along.
The musical then jumps to Hamilton writing a letter about the state of the Continental Army. Hamilton mentions the troops have almost no food, money, or supplies, and that Washington has made Charles Lee second in command of the army. However, Lee proves himself unable to lead at the Battle of Monmouth, and Washington replaces him with Lafayette. This enrages Lee, who begins to spread rumors about Washington, and Laurens (with Hamilton as his second) challenges Lee to a duel. Lee loses the duel to Laurens, but when Washington finds out, Hamilton is the one disciplined. Washington and Hamilton have a falling out over Washington’s refusal to give Hamilton command of troops, and Hamilton leaves the army to go home. There, Eliza reveals she is pregnant, and tries to persuade her husband to give up his desire for a combat post and begs him to stay alive through the war.

Her pleas fall on deaf ears. When Lafayette returns with French supplies, he persuades Washington to give Hamilton a command of soldiers. After warning Hamilton that history will watch him closely, Washington allows Hamilton to lead troops in the battle of Yorktown. This climactic battle in 1781 turned the tide of the war in favor of the United States, which led to King George the III telling the former colonies they were on their own. With the war over, both Burr and Hamilton meet their first-born children and begin working to build a new democracy. Hamilton and Burr both become lawyers in New York City, however Hamilton quickly rises above Burr. Hamilton is invited to the Constitutional Convention in 1787, writes the Federalist Papers in 1788, and is selected by Washington to be the first Secretary of the Treasury in 1789.

The second Act begins in 1789 by introducing Thomas Jefferson, who has just returned from France. He learns he has been elected Secretary of State, so he immediately heads to New York City for a cabinet meeting with Washington and Hamilton. There, Jefferson and Hamilton get into a serious debate over the national debt and whether a national bank should be
established. Jefferson argues that because Virginia has already paid its war debts, it should not have to assume debts from other states. Hamilton argues that assuming state debts will make the United States stronger, and claims the only reason Virginia has paid off its war debts is through the usage of slave labor. Post-debate, Washington tells Hamilton he needs to compromise with Jefferson and pass a financial plan, or he will be removed from the cabinet. Meanwhile, Eliza implores Hamilton to take a break from working and join her extended family in upstate New York. Hamilton refuses, and instead stays in the city, where he ends up having an affair with Maria Reynolds. Maria Reynolds’ husband, James Reynolds, finds out and blackmails Hamilton.

Hamilton also has a secret meeting with Thomas Jefferson to compromise about his financial plan. In exchange for assuming state debt and forming a national bank, Hamilton agrees to let the national capital move to Washington D.C. Burr is not invited to the meeting, and he decides to run for Hamilton’s father-in-law’s political seat so he will not be left out of future political decisions. This upsets Hamilton, as Burr deliberately changed political parties to oust Philip Schuyler, and drives a wedge between the two men. Hamilton then engages in another cabinet debate with Thomas Jefferson, this time on the topic of going to France’s aid in the war against England. Jefferson believes it is America’s duty to help France, as the U.S. signed a treaty to come to their aid, however Hamilton argues the treaty was broken when the French people killed their monarch. Washington sides with Hamilton, and has Hamilton draft a neutrality proclamation. This leads Jefferson, Madison, and Burr to speculate that Washington only listens to Hamilton’s ideas, and Jefferson resigns from the cabinet. When Washington tells Hamilton the news that Jefferson resigned, Hamilton is ecstatic. However Washington also reveals he is stepping down from power, which removes Hamilton’s political leverage.
John Adams is elected as the next president, with Jefferson as vice president. Adams fires Hamilton, so Hamilton publishes a vicious political pamphlet designed to limit Adams to one term as president, which effectively destroys Hamilton’s Federalist political party. Jefferson, Madison, and Burr decide to further ruin Hamilton politically by confronting Hamilton about his payments to James Reynolds, which they believe show that Hamilton is embezzling government funds. To clear his name, Hamilton reveals his affair with Maria Reynolds, which he later publishes publicly. This destroys Hamilton’s political future, and causes Elizabeth Hamilton to burn all of the love letters and personal correspondence Hamilton wrote her. Hamilton’s son, Philip, becomes engaged in a duel over his father’s honor as a result of the affair, and is shot during the fight. Philip is mortally wounded and dies in Hamilton and Eliza’s arms. Hamilton then removes himself from politics, as he is grieving Philip and trying to heal his marriage with Eliza, who blames him for Philip’s death.

After Eliza and Hamilton reconcile, Hamilton rejoins the political world during the election of 1800. He actively campaigns against Aaron Burr, who is running for president against Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton’s campaign against Burr leads to Jefferson winning the presidency, and creates a rift between Hamilton and Burr so large the two men challenge each other to a duel. On the dueling ground, Hamilton shoots into the air and throws away his shot, whereas Burr shoots at Hamilton and hits him. It is a mortal wound, and Hamilton dies the next day with Eliza by his side. Eliza then shows how she preserves Hamilton’s legacy by interviewing soldiers who fought with him and establishing an orphanage in his memory. The show closes by showing Eliza and Hamilton reuniting, and asking the audience “who lives, who dies, who tells your story?”
Summary of Thesis

In *Hamilton*, it is Lin-Manuel Miranda who tells Alexander Hamilton’s story, and as a result there are some notable historical inaccuracies that both academics and historic sites noticed. The first chapter of this thesis will chronologically examine historians’ analyses of *Hamilton*, and discuss the themes of race and historical accuracy in the musical. The second chapter of this study will examine how individual historic sites have responded to Hamilton. Together, the thesis shows how historians both in academia and in museums have responded to the historical popular culture phenomenon *Hamilton: An American Musical.*
Chapter One: Historical Inaccuracies and Academic Opinions of *Hamilton*

*Hamilton* was a groundbreaking musical in many ways, but its influence on the public’s perception of the founding fathers was the most notable. The “color-blind” casting of *Hamilton* allowed people of color to see themselves represented in the American Revolution, and reviewers praised the musical for making the founding fathers accessible to the public. But this is where reviewers and scholars experienced a breakdown in opinion, as some academics felt having people of color play the Founding Fathers was insulting to the slaves the founders held in bondage. Other academics critiqued *Hamilton* for erasing historical people of color during the American Revolution, and for portraying Alexander Hamilton as an abolitionist. *Hamilton* was also criticized for teaching its audiences a Federalist slanted perspective of history and skewing Alexander Hamilton’s political importance in events. Yet these dissenting academics’ voices were largely drowned out by positive academic reviews of *Hamilton* and the overwhelming popularity of the show. This changed in February 2016, when Lyra Monteiro’s criticism of *Hamilton* was published. Monteiro’s article encouraged academics to look at *Hamilton* critically, and after this point, the debates over *Hamilton* began on a variety of topics, with the most contentious centered around race. Namely, whether people of color should use *Hamilton* as a reference point to take ownership of the Founding fathers, or if people of color should find historic people of color to reclaim the American Revolution. This chapter will chronologically examine historians’ arguments for and against *Hamilton*’s usefulness and accuracy, and determine if the public accepted these academic opinions about the musical.
When *Hamilton* first debuted in 2015, the academic reviews were overwhelmingly positive. This was especially true on *The Junto*, “a group blog made up of junior early Americanists—graduate students and junior faculty,” which published three reviews that raved about *Hamilton*’s inspirational qualities. The first, by history professor Benjamin Carp, waxed poetic about *Hamilton*’s humanization of the founding fathers, mainly by showing Alexander Hamilton falling in love with his wife and spending time with his children. Carp also believed the cast of color linked the American revolution to the Black Lives Matter movement, as the white cast represented monarchial authority and the cast “of African, Latino/a, and Asian descent” represented the American Revolutionaries. Carp had virtually no academic criticism for *Hamilton* historically, besides acknowledging the small historical inaccuracies that peppered the show for storytelling purposes. Overall, Carp hoped that the popular response to *Hamilton* would lead to a “broader audience for other good histories.”

There were similar themes in the second and third *Junto* reviews by Nora Slonimsky, Christopher Minty, and Joseph M. Adelman, who all noted the historical inaccuracies in *Hamilton* but stated the inaccuracies were “not detrimental to the production.” According to the reviewers, *Hamilton*’s real strength was “putting history back in the public domain” and contributing to the civic discourse around history, which would hopefully bridge the gap between “popular” and “academic audiences.” Adelman in particular praised *Hamilton*’s use of historical

---

6 Minty, “Historians Attend Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton.*”
argument to prove that Alexander Hamilton’s life embodied hip-hop. According to Adelman, the solid history of *Hamilton* was influenced by well-regarded history books, such as Ron Chernow’s *Alexander Hamilton*. Yet Adelman also postulated that *Hamilton* did history “better” than academics because it engaged the public, mainly by telling historical stories instead of making academic arguments. Adelman concluded by saying that *Hamilton* did an excellent job at teaching the public about history, and that as a historian he could not ask for more.\(^7\)

Yet one historian did ask for more from *Hamilton*. Ishmael Reed, a highly respected African-American scholar and winner of the MacArthur Fellowship, published a negative review of *Hamilton* in late August on the left-leaning and controversial website *CounterPunch*. In the review, entitled “‘Hamilton: the Musical:’ Black Actors Dress Up like Slave Traders…and It’s Not Halloween,” Reed utilized strong, and at times crude, language to harshly disparage *Hamilton*’s lack of attention to slavery. Reed stated that *Hamilton* scrubbed the founding fathers “with a kind of historical Ajax” until they sparkled by expunging their participation in slavery from the historical record.\(^8\) Reed then went on to disprove *Hamilton*’s theory that Hamilton was abolitionist by providing historical examples of Hamilton selling slaves for the Schuyler family. Reed also took to task the black actors playing Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. He asked the actors if they knew that Washington worked tirelessly on “creating strategies” to return runaway slaves, and if the actors were aware Jefferson “beat and fucked his slaves and spied on their fucking.” Reed closed with what he considered “the final insult” of *Hamilton*: the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History program, which allowed New York City schoolchildren to see the show at a discounted rate. According to Reed, Euro-Centric schools already

\(^8\) Ishmael Reed, “‘Hamilton: the Musical:’ Black Actors Dress Up like Slave Traders…and It’s Not Halloween,” *CounterPunch*, August 21, 2015.
brainwashed people of color into honoring the “perpetrators of genocide and slave holders” known as the founding fathers, and *Hamilton* only perpetuated this problem.

Yet for all the fire in Reed’s article, there was no academic response. In fact, in the numerous positive reviews of *Hamilton* by academics and critics alike, Reed’s article was not mentioned once, possibly because *CounterPunch* did not have a wide circulation amongst professional and public historians.

The next academic response came from Andrew Schocket, an associate professor at Bowling Green State University. Schocket’s brief piece, entitled “The Founders Chic of *Hamilton,*” did not focus on issues of race, and instead focused on disproving the idea that *Hamilton* was popular because it was part of the founders chic movement. Schocket claimed that “*Hamilton*’s inventive lyrics, catchy melodies, non-stop references to contemporary culture, brilliant rhyme, fine dancing, top-notch singing, and dramatic talent” were what made the musical popular, and not its cast of founding fathers. Schocket then pointed out numerous examples of founders chic media that flopped, such as Al Pacino’s 1985 film *Revolution,* the 1997 Broadway revival of the musical *1776,* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson.* In Schocket’s eyes, this was proof *Hamilton* succeeded because it was good art, and not because of the founders chic label.9

These early academic discussions about *Hamilton* were similar to what the public and critics were saying about the show. Academics praised the cast of color, applauded the show for making the founding fathers more accessible, and did not feel *Hamilton*’s small historical inaccuracies were detrimental to the show. Ishmael Reed was the main dissenter. He argued that *Hamilton* was not an innovative musical, as it ignored and erased the founding fathers’ ties to

9 Andrew Schocket, “The Founders Chic of *Hamilton*”, *From the Square,* October 9, 2015.
slavery, and he felt that casting people of color as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, known slaveowners, was unacceptable. In fact, much of the musical’s treatment of race and slavery was unacceptable. Yet Reed was the only academic who mentioned issues of race in the early months of Hamilton.

Lyra D. Monteiro and the Critical Review

That was until Lyra D. Monteiro joined the fray in February 2016. Monteiro was an assistant history professor at Rutgers University, and her critical piece revealed Hamilton’s academic and racial flaws in the National Council of Public History’s official journal, The Public Historian. The article, entitled “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Hamilton,” began with Monteiro disagreeing with historians who praised Hamilton. According to Monteiro, Hamilton did not make the past “inclusive and empowering” to people of color, as it actually erased the real people of color who helped the founders succeed.¹⁰ This was one of Monteiro’s main criticisms of Hamilton, and she used very pointed language to state that it was not only insulting but problematic “to have black and brown actors stand in for the great white men of the early United States in a play that does not acknowledge that the ancestors of these same actors were excluded from the freedoms for which the founders fought.”¹¹ Monteiro went on to point out that Hamilton did not portray a single enslaved or free person of color during the almost three hour long play, even though there were multiple

opportunities.\textsuperscript{12} Monteiro believed that without portraying the enslaved men and women who made the Schuyler Sisters look beautiful and served Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison in “The Room Where it Happened,” \textit{Hamilton} actively erased the roles people of color played in the founding of the United States.\textsuperscript{13}

Monteiro also took umbrage at the fact that when slavery was mentioned in \textit{Hamilton}, it was used to poke fun at Thomas Jefferson, and to portray Alexander Hamilton as abolitionist. Monteiro attributed this to Miranda relying heavily on historian Ron Chernow’s biography of Hamilton, which portrayed Hamilton as pro-abolition and avoided any of Hamilton’s ties to slavery, which included renting, selling, and possibly owning slaves.\textsuperscript{14} Monteiro hypothesized that if Miranda had worked with a historian of color, he would not “have been able to write a play that downplayed race and slavery to the extent that [\textit{Hamilton}]” did.\textsuperscript{15} This might have eliminated Monteiro’s other quibble with \textit{Hamilton}, which was that the music was “racialized.” The racialized music was caused by the main stars Elizabeth Hamilton and Alexander Hamilton reading as white on stage and singing traditional white Broadway music, while the “hip-hop-spouting revolutionaries [were] all black and Latino.”\textsuperscript{16} Ultimately, Monteiro’s frustration with \textit{Hamilton} was that while the piece was a wonderful work of art, it erased the people of color that existed in history, and should not be promoted as a work that “black and brown youth” should connect with.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting,” 93.
\textsuperscript{13} Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting,” 94.
\textsuperscript{15} Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting,” 96.
\textsuperscript{16} Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting,” 91.
\textsuperscript{17} Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting,” 98.
Responses to Monteiro with the National Council of Public History

This was a bold statement. The National Council of Public History had lined up four authors to write response articles to Monteiro’s fiery review, with the first response authored by Northeastern English professor Ellen Noonan.\(^{18}\) In the article, Noonan argued *Hamilton* did not need to discuss slavery or include historical people of color because the musical was about Alexander Hamilton, and not the “presence and contributions of people of color.”\(^{19}\) Noonan also believed *Hamilton* would not have sold tickets in the “deeply for-profit precincts of Broadway” if it had discussed these issues. Broadway politics was also used to defend *Hamilton*’s casting choices, as Noonan argued *Hamilton* should be celebrated for casting people of color in an area frequently known as the Great White Way. Noonan then rebutted Monteiro’s point about Hamilton and Angelica reading “white” or “black” by arguing that *Hamilton* cast actors for their ability “to successfully perform Miranda’s dense, rhythmically complex raps” and not for the color of their skin. Lastly, Noonan agreed with Monteiro that the cut *Hamilton* rap about slavery made Hamilton look like an abolitionist, but stated that because Miranda planned to release the rap to the public, the cut to the show was acceptable.

The next author in the *National Council of Public History*, Jason Allen, focused on the concept of African-Americans erasing their identities to portray the founding fathers. In “A color-blind Stockholm syndrome,” Allen argued *Hamilton* inspired people of color to erase or minimize slavery’s past in the United States, which was a disservice to the enslaved ancestors of many people of color. Allen made this point by comparing *Hamilton* to *A Birthday Cake for Tamara Gaskell*, co-editor of *The Public Historian*, e-mail message to author, February 14, 2018.

---

\(^{18}\) Tamara Gaskell, co-editor of *The Public Historian*, e-mail message to author, February 14, 2018.

George Washington, a children’s book where George Washington’s slaves took pride in making Washington’s birthday cake. Allen argued A Birthday Cake for George Washington and Hamilton both attempted to “present American history in a way that absolve[d] the founders…from the crime of human trafficking,” which made it easier for people of color to ignore “the terror committed upon their ancestors.” Hamilton was flawed because it integrated people of color into the stories of the founding fathers “without burdening the audience with the baggage of racism…in the origins of the United States.”

David Dean, the history professor who wrote the next response on the National Council of Public History website, decided to address the concept of performed history in “History and Performance: Hamilton: An American Musical.” According to Dean, Hamilton did not have to be historically accurate because it was performed history. This meant that Hamilton’s purpose was to “entertain as well as educate,” and did not have to be historically accurate. This also meant it was acceptable for people of color to play historical figures, as it gave the actors a sense of ownership over the period. Dean also argued that Hamilton’s rap and hip-hop score, along with its cast of color, allowed audiences to collapse historical distance between the modern day and the revolutionary period. This gave people of color a “presence in a past” they had been excluded from, and encouraged whites “to rethink their own place in history.” All of these factors combined were what created Hamilton’s ability to make audiences and people of color “see the past as contested territory.” Dean believed it was acceptable for people of color to play

---

22 Dean, “History and Performance.”
the founding fathers in *Hamilton*, as audiences were aware they were seeing an interpretation of history.

The next author was Annette Gordon-Reed, a Harvard professor and winner of a MacArthur Fellowship. Gordon-Reed believed *Hamilton* should be critically analyzed even if it was a musical for entertainment, and her article, “*Hamilton: The Musical: Blacks and the founding fathers,*” examined Monteiro’s points about *Hamilton* and race while discussing the contradictions inherent to *Hamilton*’s success. The first contradiction Gordon-Reed addressed was the idea of black actors playing white founding fathers. Gordon-Reed believed that while audiences should be allowed to suspend their belief to believe a black man was playing Thomas Jefferson, they should not suspend their disbelief so much that the significance of Thomas Jefferson being played by a black person was lost. Yet at the same time audiences should not be so aware of the cast of color that they felt uncomfortable when the Schuyler sisters proclaimed “how ‘lucky’ they were ‘to be alive’ during a time of African chattel slavery.”

Gordon-Reed also postulated *Hamilton* was insulated from criticism because of the cast of color, and suggested that if the cast had been white, the rapping and lack of historical black characters would have been more jarring. At the end of her article, Gordon-Reed commended Monteiro for bringing *Hamilton*’s flaws to light, and stated that historians should continue to comment on history based art even when it was successful.

Gordon-Reed’s article was published on April 6, 2016, and within the next few weeks, a deluge of articles critiquing, defending, and commenting on *Hamilton* flooded the internet and print. One of these articles was by Nancy Isenberg, a notable Burr scholar and history professor, 23 Gordon-Reed, *Hamilton: The Musical: Blacks and the founding fathers,*” *National Council of Public History,* April 6, 2016.
who criticized *Hamilton* for taking creative liberties with the antagonist, Aaron Burr. In contrast to Montiero’s piece, Isenberg’s article “Let’s Not Pretend that Hamilton is History” never mentioned race, and instead focused on how Burr was turned into a caricature and a villain in *Hamilton*. Published in the brief window between the *National Council of Public History*’s responses, Isenberg’s article was only about Burr’s portrayal in *Hamilton*, which she called unfair and inaccurate. Isenberg pointed out that Burr was a feminist before his time, more pro-immigrant than Alexander Hamilton, and supported both the working and the upper classes, which made *Hamilton*’s portrayal a cruel caricature of Burr. But what truly upset Isenberg was *Hamilton*’s accusation that Burr “knowingly shot Hamilton after he saw him fire a bullet in the air,” when, according to Isenberg, it was Hamilton’s illegal hair trigger pistols that caused Hamilton’s death. In her conclusion, Isenberg stated Americans needed to embrace the real, darker history of the United States’ past, and stop idolizing founding fathers like Hamilton.

The *National Council of Public History*’s arguments varied in popularity, with Gordon Reed’s the most popular and Allen, Noonan, and Dean’s arguments the least popular.

This could have been caused by a variety of factors, including the social media presence of the historians and their stature within the history field. It could also have been on the strength of the responses. Noonan did not strongly defend against Monteiro’s points, and her defense that *Hamilton* was about Alexander Hamilton and not historical people of color implied that the people of color in Hamilton’s life should be ignored or erased. Dean’s argument that *Hamilton* was a work of fiction and did not have to be historically accurate was also weak, as *Hamilton*

---

was historically accurate enough to fool casual audiences into believing it was history. Neither of these responses focused on Monteiro’s valid complaints about race erasure in Hamilton, likely because both Noonan and Dean considered Hamilton a work of fiction, which would not need to be historically accurate. Allen and Gordon-Reed did believe Hamilton had a duty to be historically accurate because of the complicated issues of slavery and race surrounding the founding fathers. Allen went so far as to accuse Hamilton of telling stories about the founding fathers “without burdening the audience with the baggage of racism.”

The Public Notices the Academic Debate

The official responses to Monteiro’s article caught the attention of the New York Times, which ran an article in early April of 2016 called “‘Hamilton’ and History: Are They in Sync?” In the article, various historians’ perspectives on Hamilton were discussed, including historians like David Waldstreicher, who felt that Hamilton was part of the “Founders Chic” phenomenon and was getting a free pass from historical criticism. Gordon-Reed’s National Council on Public History article was referenced to discuss historians who criticized Hamilton on racial grounds, whereas Ron Chernow, historical consultant to Hamilton and author of Alexander Hamilton, was used to defend the musical. Chernow responded to Gordon-Reed and Monteiro’s racial criticisms of Hamilton by stating that they were “based on ‘an enormous misunderstanding’ of the show,” and that “casting black and Latino actors as the founders

---

effectively [wrote] nonwhite people” into revolutionary history. Yet Chernow did not defend against Monteiro’s criticism that historical people of color were not written into the story, or her accusation that Hamilton portrayed Alexander Hamilton as a staunch abolitionist.

Beyond critiquing Hamilton on race, the New York Times also introduced historians like Sean Wilentz, a professor at Princeton, who critiqued Hamilton on economic grounds. Wilentz’s main criticism of Hamilton centered on how it was incorrect to portray Alexander Hamilton as a hero of the people, as Hamilton was an “unabashed elitist who liked big banks [and] mistrusted the masses.” Eric Foner, professor of history at Columbia and Pulitzer Prize winner, also discussed Hamilton’s distrust of the masses, stating in an interview that “he wished the show had complicated its populist portrait by noting Hamilton’s elitism and dedication to property rights,” which were “more important to [Hamilton]” than fighting slavery. Richard B. Bernstein, an adjunct professor at New York Law School and author of several books about the founding fathers, focused on slavery, and said he appreciated how Hamilton kept “the subject of slavery simmering underneath its jam-packed story.”

The New York Times article brought the critiques of Hamilton to the public eye, and a flurry of articles were soon published both defending and critiquing the musical. One such article critiquing the musical was by Ishmael Reed, writing again on CounterPunch. In his second article on Hamilton, this time entitled “Hamilton and the Negro Whisperers: Miranda’s Consumer Fraud,” Reed stated the musical was only successful because Hamilton skipped over Alexander Hamilton’s slave owning past. He challenged Chernow and Hamilton’s idea that Hamilton was horrified by slavery, as “Hamilton never mentioned anything…about the horrors

27 Schuessler, “‘Hamilton’ and History.”
28 Schuessler, “‘Hamilton’ and History.”
of plantation slavery” in his voluminous writings, and Hamilton’s grandson Allan McLane Hamilton wrote that Alexander Hamilton owned slaves. 29 This was in direct confrontation to Hamilton’s portrayal of Alexander Hamilton, and Reed questioned why these facts were not brought up in the musical or in the New York Times article. According to Reed, the fact that Hamilton’s slave ownership was not included made the New York Times article a debate between “the Historical Establishment” over “whether Hamilton was abolitionist or not abolitionist enough,” and not a real investigation of Hamilton’s accuracy. Reed concluded by stressing black lives did not matter in Hamilton, and that the real history of Hamilton the slave owner would never come out. 30

Kenneth Owen, assistant history professor at the University of Illinois, agreed with Reed’s idea that Hamilton was not the true history of Alexander Hamilton. In his article “Historians and Hamilton: Founders Chic and the Cult of Personality,” Owen looked deeper at how Hamilton promoted hero worship of Alexander Hamilton by utilizing the founders chic trope. According to Owen, this trope was the exaggeration of the importance of individuals “at the expense of understanding the contribution of less-celebrated Americans.” Hamilton accomplished this by blaming Hamilton’s political missteps on his personal character, and not on Hamilton’s deeply unpopular political policies. One example Owen provided of this behavior was the song “The Reynolds Pamphlet,” which implied Hamilton’s sexual impropriety lost him the presidential bid, whereas Owen believed it was Hamilton’s “elitist and crony capitalist economic scheming” which made him lose his chance at the presidency. 31 According to Owen,

---

29 Ishmael Reed, “Hamilton and the Negro Whisperers: Miranda’s Consumer Fraud,” CounterPunch, April 15, 2016.
30 Reed, “Hamilton and the Negro Whisperers.”
one of Hamilton’s other flaws was avoiding Hamilton’s militarism, which was on prominent display during the Newburgh Conspiracy and the Whiskey Rebellion. By avoiding discussing these character flaws in Hamilton, Owen called the musical a historical “comfort blanket” rather than a means to “enhance popular understanding of the American Revolution,” and he closed his article by stating it was a shame “that such great entertainment [failed] to fully explore the complexities of the past.”

While the New York Times article summarized the debates about race and historical accuracy by using Gordon-Reed and Chernow as spokespersons, it more importantly addressed other historians’ populist and economic concerns about the musical. The lack of Hamilton’s militarism was also brought up by academics, however the high acclaim for Hamilton was still maintained, even though academics wished Hamilton had not simplified the past so much. This seemed to be the consensus for many historians who appreciated the art of Hamilton but disagreed with its presentation of history.

**Monteiro’s Last Critique of Hamilton**

This was Lyra D. Monteiro’s perspective in her article, “It’s not ‘just a musical,’” the last installment of the response articles in the National Council of Public History History @ Work series. In Monteiro’s response, she discussed how in the four months since the National Council of Public History had published her review of Hamilton, several historians had diminished her opinion of the musical, calling her “breathtakingly ignorant” and telling her she had

---

32 Owen, “Historians and Hamilton.”
misunderstood the point of *Hamilton*. This made it difficult for Monteiro to respond, as many of those writing about “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Hamilton” had not fully read her article. Yet Monteiro argued that this inability to discuss *Hamilton*’s imperfections came from the public’s flawed belief that “the historian’s role [was] to be an empirical policeman over any interpretation of the past,” which meant nitpicking media and art for historical accuracy.

Monteiro said this was not true, as “the role of the public historian [was] to critique the unnoticed and often unintentional messages contained in popular stories about the past,” which meant that even “brilliant, witty, lyrical, musically complex” juggernauts like *Hamilton* should be critiqued. This held doubly true for media involving the founding fathers, whose “legacy of anti-blackness,” continued to affect the United States in the present day. Monteiro believed she had a duty to criticize *Hamilton*, as *Hamilton*’s sweeping of historical people of color under the rug obscured “the white supremacist origins” of the United States, while also implying that the racism and sexism the U.S. was built upon “were design flaws, not deliberate features.” According to Monteiro, the United States was “not yet in a place as a country” for the casting of people of color as founding fathers, as the United States still looked up to the founders even though they were involved in the unforgivable crimes of slavery. Ultimately, Monteiro believed that the casting of people of color did not disrupt “the dominant narrative” that lauded “the founders as great men whose actions created an unequivocally great nation.”

---

Critique by the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic

This powerful statement by Monteiro on Hamilton in June closed the academic debate on the National Council of Public History History @ Work series. However, the next academic debate was beginning at the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR). SHEAR is an “association of scholars dedicated to exploring the events and the meaning of United States history between 1776 and 1861,” and the membership mainly consists of “professional historians employed in colleges, universities, museums, and historical parks and agencies, as well as independent scholars and graduate students.”

This academic group meets once a year to debate significant historical topics, such as race, gender, and economics, and in 2016, Hamilton the musical. As such, SHEAR opened their 2016 meeting with a filmed interview by Lin-Manuel Miranda. In the interview, historians Joanne Freeman and Brian Philips Murphy questioned Miranda on a variety of topics, from academic research to casting questions. After the taped interview, there was an academic panel featuring the interviewers Joanne Freeman and Brian Philips Murphy, and two professors of history, Ada Ferrer and Annette Gordon-Reed. Unfortunately, this plenary panel was not recorded, but many of the issues discussed at this panel came up the following Friday, when SHEAR hosted a “critical roundtable” on Hamilton the musical. Entitled “‘History is Happening in Manhattan’: A critical roundtable on Hamilton,” the roundtable showcased works by Benjamin Carp, Nancy Isenberg, and

---

34 “Home,” SHEAR.
Heather Nathans, and Andrew Schocket, with a concluding statement by the presider R.B. Bernstein.37

The first professor to speak at the roundtable was Benjamin Carp, whose talk, “Hamilton and the Revolution,” centered on whether Hamilton was ‘good’ for historians. Carp began his talk by praising Lin-Manuel Miranda for using primary sources and other historical monographs to write Hamilton, but also critiquing Miranda for relying too heavily on Chernow, who emphasized Hamilton’s anti-slavery tendencies.38 Carp also criticized Hamilton for focusing on elite characters, using the musical style of storytelling to make the founders into heroes and villains, and avoiding inconvenient truths like slavery and the whiskey rebellion.39 Once Carp finished critiquing Hamilton, he moved on to his main point; the idea that historians should be able to “take credit for what Miranda gets right, and criticize him for what he misses or gets wrong.”40 Carp believed that because historians laid “the foundation for artists’ interpretations,” musicals like Hamilton were actually good for historians. Furthermore, musicals like Hamilton made the public more empathetic to the past and encouraged them to investigate the historiographical process of history.41 Carp also briefly addressed the criticism of people of color playing white slave-owners by stating that the cast of color allowed “Miranda to connect the eighteenth-century Revolution to contemporary activism against police brutality.”42 Carp then closed by stating that Hamilton deserved respect from historians, as it inspired the public to

37 “38th Annual Meeting Program,” 36. It is important to note that Catherine Allgor of Huntington Library and the University of California was slated to give a talk entitled “Hamilton and Gender” at this panel, but she was unable to attend and did not present.
38 C-span.org, “History and Hamilton the Musical,” Video 4:45 – 5:20
39 C-SPAN 5:50, 8:08.
40 C-SPAN 9:35.
42 C-SPAN 11:06
research historical topics and gave professional historians an opportunity to tell more diverse stories outside of the “founders cul-de-sac.”

Professor Nancy Isenberg went the opposite direction in her speech, entitled “‘Make ‘em Laugh’: Why History cannot be reduced to Song and Dance.” In Isenberg’s eyes, Hamilton was an unoriginal way of looking at history that corrupted historical truth in the eyes of the public. Hamilton only became popular because Hamilton’s character had “brazen sex appeal, macho brashness,” and a brilliant mind, and because it allowed “Americans to overcome their disillusionment with the founders over the embarrassment of slavery.” Moreover, Hamilton represented the age of Obama, where immigrants could thrive and the American Dream was possible. Isenberg then proceeded to list her criticisms of Hamilton, which included Hamilton’s lack of 18th century feminism, the erasure of power structures such as race, gender, and class, and Hamilton’s avoidance of the historical Hamilton’s unprogressive ideas, which included promoting child labor. Yet Isenberg’s most stringent criticism against Hamilton was that it embraced misconceptions and biases about history, which hurt the relevance of professional history. In a later revision of the speech, Isenberg stated power was the main issue, as professional historians had little influence in the modern day “media-saturated universe” and could not speak over powerful outlets like Broadway. Even so, Isenberg insisted it was the professional historians’ job “to make the cultural producers of popular history more accountable”

44 C-SPAN 17:35, 17:50, 18:40; Nancy Isenberg, “‘Make ‘em Laugh’: Why History cannot be reduced to Song and Dance,” Journal of the Early Republic 37, no. 2, (Summer 2017): 296.
45 C-SPAN 18:56; Isenberg, “‘Make ‘em Laugh’”, 297.
46 C-SPAN 19:44 20:32; Isenberg, “‘Make ‘em Laugh’,” 298.
48 C-SPAN 28:37; Isenberg, “‘Make ‘em Laugh’”, 302.
49 Isenberg, “‘Make ‘em Laugh’” 302.
and to “teach the public about what distinguishes real scholarship from popular versions,” such as *Hamilton.*

Heather Nathans chose a completely different direction in her talk, “Crooked Histories: Race, Federalism, and Re-presenting Alexander Hamilton.” Instead of analyzing *Hamilton’s* historical relevance, Nathans analyzed *Hamilton’s* relevance in theatre history, namely as a work that used Alexander Hamilton to comment on race, citizenship, and belonging. According to Nathans, Alexander Hamilton was a popular theatrical character in the first half of the nineteenth century, either starring or being referenced in nine different dramas. Each play utilized Hamilton in a different way, from portraying him as a master schemer, political genius, or unassimilable immigrant traitor. According to Nathans, the public’s exposure to history in these plays was just as important as their exposure from books, as it allowed historical gaps to be filled by playwrights. From this viewpoint, Lin-Manuel Miranda’s casting of people of color as founding fathers helped to fill the archival gaps left by historical people of color, as *Hamilton* made “visible the Afro-diasporic significance in American history.” While Nathans did gently rebuke *Hamilton* for not presenting the violent history against enslaved people of color, she quickly pointed out that historically, playwrights had great difficulty portraying the violent history of slavery on stage. By casting people of color to play the founding fathers, *Hamilton* was telling a “crooked history” against the dominant white narrative, which would change

50 Isenberg, “‘Make ‘em Laugh’”, 303.
54 C-SPAN 32:20; Nathans, “Crooked Histories,” 274.
56 C-SPAN 36:45; Nathans, “Crooked Histories,” 276.
perceptions about the founding fathers and allow historical people of color’s stories to be told on stage.  

Andrew Schocket took a similar perspective in his speech “‘The Revolution’s Happening in New York’…and on a Screen Near You: The Birth of a Nation Genre,” where he discussed how Hamilton fit neatly into the “American Revolution Rebooted” movement. Schocket’s theory of the American Revolution Rebooted had three major identifiers. First, all protagonists had to be patriotic, heterosexual white men who supported America, and all antagonists had to be cowardly, effeminate, or brutal British or Tory leaning people. Second, patriotism “consist[ed] of a personal, libertarian view of ‘freedom’” that was consistent with modern definitions, and anyone who became a patriot usually did so in reaction to British violence against people and property. Third, American Revolution dramas resolved their conflicts by “unanimity among Anglo Americans” which resulted in the “expulsion of the deviant population.” Schocket then neatly proved how Hamilton fit all of these categories, citing the heterosexual main characters, the effeminate King George, the unified heroes who were either against or silent on the topic of liberty for slaves, and the eventual expulsion of Samuel Seabury, a prominent Tory in the play. In a revised version of his speech, Schocket then refuted the fact that Hamilton was original by utilizing hip-hop and a cast of color. He stated that the creators of 1776 thought they were original when they had “the Continental Congress break into song and dance”, and that Hollywood had been experimenting with diverse casting for several years. However, Schocket

---

57 C-SPAN 42:21; Nathans, “Crooked Histories,” SHEAR 277
59 C-SPAN 49:54; Schocket, “The American Revolution Rebooted,” 266.
60 C-SPAN 52:08; Schocket, “The American Revolution Rebooted,” 266-267.
did concede *Hamilton’s* impact on immigrants and people of color, saying *Hamilton* allowed black and brown Americans to “see themselves as belonging to the founding and vice versa.”

Schocket also commended *Hamilton* for making Jefferson and Hamilton argue with each other in the cabinet debates, as it showed that Jefferson and Hamilton were equally patriotic for having “sincere and passionate divisions” about the future of the country. Schocket ultimately concluded that *Hamilton* was important even though it did not break the American Revolution rebooted mold, as it had helped to reify the conversation around the Founding Fathers.

Richard B. Bernstein, the presider of the roundtable, then gave a brief speech discussing the various points brought up by the speakers and offering his own perspective. Bernstein began his talk by applauding Isenberg’s “uncompromising critique of *Hamilton* and other “pseudohistorical works” and stating that her caution about *Hamilton* reminded historians to be more vigilant about historical accuracy. However, Bernstein felt that her comparison of *Hamilton* to the Obama era was more ingenious then convincing, and said that Isenberg resembled “a soccer referee wielding a red card” at dramatists who were trying to experiment in the field of history. On the other hand, Bernstein found Andrew Schocket’s American Revolution Rebooted theory extremely convincing, as he had persuasively argued the three conventions that helped to define *Hamilton’s* role in the American Revolution Rebooted. Bernstein also agreed with Carp’s assertion that *Hamilton* encouraged its audience to do further

---

63 C-SPAN 57:00
64 C-SPAN 58:17; Schocket, “The American Revolution Rebooted,” 269.
66 C-SPAN 1:03:09; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
67 C-SPAN 1:04:10; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
research outside of the musical. Bernstein finished his summary by calling Nathans’ paper remarkable, and admiring how she situated *Hamilton* in the “context of a rich, startling history of nineteenth-century plays about the American founding.”

Bernstein then offered his own thesis: namely, that *Hamilton* should be viewed as Shakespeare history. According to Bernstein, Shakespeare’s historical plays, like *Julius Caesar*, relied on the character’s human cores and not their historical accuracy, which was exactly what *Hamilton* was trying to do. *Hamilton* also taught audiences that “politics is, and must be, hard work,” calling it a valuable lesson in the modern day. Lastly, Bernstein stated that he was not worried about *Hamilton* reshaping the perception of early American history, as he believed that students and audiences would not “supinely” accept the play as historical reality.

Accepting the play as historically accurate was the main discussion point in the SHEAR roundtable. Carp believed it was okay that *Hamilton* was not historically accurate, as it engaged the public and made them interested in the field of history. Schocket agreed with this sentiment, even though he felt *Hamilton* was not truly revolutionary because of how well it fit the American Revolution Rebooted mold. Bernstein also supported *Hamilton*, as he felt audiences would recognize it as an inaccurate version of history and seek out the facts on their own. The SHEAR roundtable also focused on race and the reclamation of the founding fathers. Nathans’ talk centered on how theatre productions like *Hamilton* helped to tell stories outside of the traditional white narrative, which allowed people of color to reclaim the founding period. Isenberg disagreed, and said *Hamilton* should be criticized for its racial inaccuracies, as it was

---

68 C-SPAN 1:05:23; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
69 C-SPAN 1:06:12; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
70 C-SPAN 1:07:09; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
71 C-SPAN 1:08:43; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
72 C-SPAN 1:09:22; Bernstein, “Shakespeare History.”
perpetuating the historical practice of ignoring slaves and people of color. Isenberg also said that *Hamilton* was a product of Obama’s presidency, as Obama actively supported immigrants and the American Dream. This is an interesting point, as it is possible that *Hamilton* might have received less criticism about race and slavery if a man of color was not the president. It’s certainly true that the criticisms of *Hamilton* have died down since the 45th president took office. However, it is also possible critics have nothing new to say after three years of *Hamilton* being on display.

**SHEAR Roundtable Audience Questions**

Bernstein and the roundtable then opened the floor to audience questions. The first question was about interpretations of history on film, which inspired Professor Nathans to discuss how quickly Americans began to use prophesy to show that the seeds of revolution were always present in the colonies. Bernstein agreed, and referenced a “prophetic” letter Benjamin Rush wrote to John Adams, which predicted Jefferson and Adams would renew their friendship. Isenberg then jumped in to ask if using the word prophecy compounded the problem of “conflating religious notions with historical notions,” which could be used to create a narrative out of the Revolution. In Isenberg’s eyes, the idea of prophecy made the Revolution seem like a foregone conclusion, which was historically untrue. Isenberg then pivoted to tackle Bernstein’s point that *Hamilton* should be considered Shakespeare history, as she maintained that Shakespeare history was called literature. By calling *Hamilton* history, the public did not see the important elements historians spent “time recovering [and] talking about.” She then went on to

---

73 C-SPAN 1:17:00
say *Hamilton* portrayed a comfortable view of the American past that did not have race, class, or gender.\(^7\)

Another audience question led to a brief discussion of 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century notions of romance, with Carp bringing up the topic of people ‘shipping’, or romantically paring John Laurens and Alexander Hamilton. Carp stated that it was difficult for modern day historians to interpret 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century emotions in Hamilton and Laurens’ letters, as modern audiences did not fully understand “how people of the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century used emotional language.”\(^7\) The next question touched on how historians should hold cultural makers responsible for adding historical integrity into their work, but most of the panel agreed that this would be almost impossible to undertake.\(^7\) Isenberg then used the next question, which asked about the inherent Caribbean nature of *Hamilton*, to once again discuss the political agenda of marketing *Hamilton* as history to the American public, as it blinded the American public into learning a selective view of American history. Isenberg disagreed with Bernstein’s point that *Hamilton’s* audiences would be inspired to do more research, and said it was an optimistic point of view.\(^7\) An audience member then asked about the transformation of the song “One Last Ride” into “One Last Time,” which had changed from talking about the Whiskey rebellion to discussing Washington stepping down from power.\(^7\) Professor Carp responded by stating that Miranda cut the song because it lost the audience’s attention, but he agreed that the song change led to Washington and Hamilton’s characters losing a valuable military dimension.\(^7\)

\(^7\) C-SPAN 1:17:46 - 1:21:45
\(^7\) C-SPAN 1:23:45
\(^7\) C-SPAN 1:27:52
\(^7\) C-SPAN 1:29:46
\(^7\) C-SPAN 1:30:54
\(^7\) C-SPAN 1:31:43
After Carp finished speaking, historian David Waldstreicher jumped in to fault *Hamilton* for systematically privileging “emotions and relationships over political issues,” and for telling the story of the Revolution from a Federalist point of view. Waldstreicher further accused academics of using *Hamilton* to give the federalist interpretation of history a second life.

Waldstreicher then proceeded to define founders chic for the room of professional historians, which he stated was any literature that celebrated the founding fathers, promoted a neo federalist point of view, privileged characters and personalities over political issues and content, and maintained the “good founders were anti-slavery.”

Waldstreicher then illustrated several examples of these behaviors in *Hamilton*, including when “Laurens and Hamilton imagine[d] themselves as anti-slavery freedom fighters,” and “Angelica saying [Hamilton] could have done more” to end slavery at the end of the musical. [It was actually Elizabeth Schuyler who said this at the end of the musical.] Waldstreicher also pointed to *Hamilton*’s use of political drama between Hamilton and Jefferson to encapsulate “the entire political history of the early republic.”

Waldstreicher then compared Joe Ellis’s book *Founding Brothers* to *Hamilton*, as he felt they both put strong emphasizes on the founding fathers’ anti-slavery tendencies. Bernstein then interjected to say he did not take Joe Ellis seriously as a historian, which caused Waldstreicher to protest that Bernstein was willing to take Lin-Manuel Miranda seriously as a historian. This caused Bernstein to state that he did not take Lin-Manuel Miranda seriously as a historian, as both Ellis and Miranda reduced the American Revolution to the “foreground founding guys.” However Bernstein also stated historians should
not completely avoid the founding fathers either. Bernstein then replied to Waldstreicher’s claim that a pro-federalist point of view was returning to studies of the American Revolution by stating that most historians would speak up when authors tried to foist “substitutes for historical understanding on readers.”

Waldstreicher disagreed, citing the lack of academic response against Ron Chernow’s *Alexander Hamilton*, which he said promoted a pro federalist interpretation of history. Waldstreicher attributed this lack of academic response to early American historians not caring about the political issues of the 1790s. Isenberg jumped in to state that Waldstreicher was missing the power dynamics at play in the world of history. Isenberg reiterated that Hollywood surpassed historians’ ability to tell historically accurate stories, and the power imbalance meant that historians had little influence over the stories being told. Isenberg then said that Hamilton as portrayed in the musical was not the historical Hamilton, and she emphasized it was important to “understand the founders with all their flaws” and not turn them into icons. She concluded by saying historians needed to fight back against popular culture and teach accurate history, as historians’ knowledge still mattered in the real world. Professor Nathans also brought up the point that *Hamilton*’s potential future as a film would concretize the meaning of the musical. She then compared *Hamilton* to the musical *RENT*, and said the transformation from stage to screen changed the “liveness” of the performance of *RENT*, which was one of the reasons *Hamilton* had such an impact on perceptions of the founding fathers. *Hamilton* changed perceptions of the founders because audiences could see them live “two or three feet away” and could “illegally film them on their cellphones,” which made the *Hamilton* versions of the founders seem more

85 C-SPAN 1:38:50
86 C-SPAN 1:40:05
alive. The session then closed with a question about the ending of *Hamilton* where Elizabeth Hamilton worked to preserve Alexander Hamilton’s legacy, which Isenberg said was an attempt to “turn Elizabeth Schuyler into Nancy Reagan.” She reasserted that *Hamilton* was about Alexander Hamilton’s legacy and not about Eliza’s, and Professor Schocket agreed with her statement before the panel came to a close.

The audience question section was easily dominated by Isenberg, who had a lot to say about *Hamilton*’s version of history. She said *Hamilton* portrayed a comfortable view of the past, and that she did not believe the public would want to do research to discover the real, darker history of the United States. She also firmly believed historians did not have a strong influence on history when compared to popular works like *Hamilton*, but she argued historians should tell the historical truth anyway. Waldstreicher also dominated the conversation by repeatedly criticizing *Hamilton* for pushing a Federalist version of history and emphasizing Hamilton as an abolitionist, which was not historically accurate. These criticisms, and Carp’s criticism that *Hamilton* avoided the military aspects of Hamilton’s life, had been brought up before in the academic analysis of *Hamilton*. Nathans’ point was the only one that had not been brought up in academic discussion yet. Nathans’ idea that audiences were heavily impacted by *Hamilton*’s perceptions of the founding fathers because they could see them live and up close warrants further study, as the amount of blogs, fanart, and fanfiction about *Hamilton* suggest a deep audience connection to the characters/historical figures in *Hamilton*.
The Last Critiques

The recording of the *Hamilton* roundtable panel was released on August 22, 2016, approximately a month after the event, yet before the roundtable was made public, another historian spoke his piece.\(^89\) Richard Samuelson, an associate professor of history at California State University, published an article entitled “Hamilton versus History” in the conservative publication the *Claremont Review of Books*. Samuelsone’s article was subtly critical of *Hamilton*, with frequent allusions to the lack of religion and morality in the musical. Amongst these criticisms was that *Hamilton* implied the American republic was “a blank canvas on which ambitious and talented men, of whatever character” could leave their mark, and that *Hamilton* created a ‘girl power’ story out of the Declaration of Independence.\(^90\) Samuelson also took issue with the fact that a God/Creator figure was not mentioned in *Hamilton*, and implied that this lack of God in the musical explained why Lin-Manuel Miranda used the show to support Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.\(^91\) Samuelson also took issue with Eliza Hamilton’s song at the end of the show, as he felt that Eliza embodied feminist morals by being more worried about her own legacy then the orphanage she built. Samuelson further criticized *Hamilton* for not praising the goodness of Washington’s retired life, and for hiding Alexander and Eliza Hamilton’s devout faith and religion. Samuelson concluded by saying that while he was grateful to *Hamilton* for

\(^{89}\) Benjamin L. Carp, Twitter Post, August 22, 2016, 5:53am, https://twitter.com/bencarp/status/767706348947660800


\(^{91}\) Samuelson, “Hamilton versus History,” The direct quote is, “That Miranda has endorsed Hillary Clinton for president and has been a recurring player in gatherings at the Obama White House are consistent with this gloss on the founding and on the nature of rights.”
“bringing Americans by the thousands back to the founding,” he believed audiences should look elsewhere for direction in religious and moral teachings.\textsuperscript{92}

Professor Annette Gordon-Reed released an academic article on the website \textit{Vox} a few weeks later, entitled “The intense debates surrounding Hamilton don't diminish the musical — they enrich it,” which attempted to summarize the debates around \textit{Hamilton} and analyze them for the general public. Gordon-Reed began her article by explaining many of the debates were polarized, as those who defended \textit{Hamilton} seemed to believe “critical discussion of the work [would] inevitably diminish Miranda’s accomplishment.”\textsuperscript{93} Some of those criticisms included \textit{Hamilton}’s lack of historical people of color, the promotion of Alexander Hamilton as anti-slavery, the understated nature of “Hamilton’s deep commitment to elitism,” and the use of founders chic. All these flaws promoted a simplified version of the American Revolution, which erased the “Native Americans, poor whites, blacks (enslaved and free), and women,” who were part of the story.\textsuperscript{94} Yet Gordon-Reed said historians could still enjoy the musical, as long as they critically analyzed and nitpicked for historical accuracy. This ‘nitpicking’ generated a great deal of heat for historians however, as many academics were “derided as nitpickers who [did] not understand, or respect, the creative process, as if merely setting out where the play veer[ed] from the historical record were a presumptively hostile act.” Gordon-Reed reiterated that ‘nitpicking’ was essential, as knowing the true history would allow audiences to “fully appreciate the artistry involved in condensing material and making necessary alterations” to make the story interesting.

Beyond history, Gordon-Reed also believed that it was important for historians to challenge and

\textsuperscript{92} Samuelson, “Hamilton versus History.”
\textsuperscript{93} Annette Gordon-Reed, “The intense debates surrounding Hamilton don't diminish the musical — they enrich it,” \textit{Vox}, 13 September 2016.
\textsuperscript{94} Gordon-Reed, “The intense debates surrounding Hamilton.”
analyze *Hamilton* on racial grounds, citing Lyra Monteiro’s article on how *Hamilton*’s main characters read as ‘white’ and ‘black’. Gordon-Reed ended with the same sentiment from her *Public Historian* article: “It is possible to raise… hard questions about *Hamilton* and also think it [is] a great musical that should be [taken]… seriously enough to be analyzed.”

After this article by Annette Gordon-Reed in September of 2016, the academic responses to *Hamilton* became nonexistent. The publication of the *Journal of the Early Republic* (JER) in the summer of 2017 contained the next academic response on *Hamilton*, which was a symposium style section on *Hamilton*. Some of the authors in the symposium included Andrew Schocket, Heather Nathans, Benjamin Carp, and Nancy Isenberg, yet their articles were almost exactly identical to the presentations they gave at the SHEAR *Hamilton* roundtable in 2016. As such, they will not be repeated in this chapter a second time. Instead, the analysis will jump to Joanne Freeman’s article, entitled “Will the Real Alexander Hamilton Please Stand Up?” Freeman’s article began by highlighting the criticisms of *Hamilton*, including the “relative silence on slavery and gender,” the “‘Great Man’ approach” to the past, and Isenberg’s concern that the simplified history would discourage audiences “from grappling with America’s far more complex and problematic past.” Freeman’s focus was to illustrate the differences between the historical Alexander Hamilton and the ‘musical’ Hamilton created for Broadway. The ‘musical’ Hamilton was a unique product of the 21st century, as he was proud of his immigrant background, openly abolitionist, and seen as a folk hero. The folk hero label struck Freeman as the most strange, as the masses were generally not fans of the historical Hamilton due to his

---

unpopular politics and aristocratic tendencies. Freeman also believed Hamilton’s use of emotions enamored Hamilton to the modern audience, as the emotional music captured “the boastful swagger and rampant insecurities of the experimental young republic.” These emotions were heightened by the cast of color, which transformed the founding fathers from “white, elite, and boring” men into passionate revolutionaries. Freeman concluded by saying that the “de-familiarization” of the founding fathers was an educational opportunity, and historians who pushed past Hamilton’s “dark places and omissions” could add in the stories of “popular politics, women, or slavery” the musical lacked.

Marvin McAllister, an associate professor of African American Studies and English at the University of South Carolina–Columbia, agreed with this sentiment in his article “Toward a More Perfect Hamilton.” The crux of McAllister’s argument was that Hamilton fell short in addressing racial issues because it ignored the historical people of color present in early America. This meant future generations would have to add back in the “cultural and political complexity” Hamilton lacked. McAllister then explored critic Aja Romano’s concept that Hamilton was fanfiction, a category of literature that allowed artists to freely take from the “canon” and manipulate it. Hamilton was fanfiction because it took from the canon of history and changed the race of the founding fathers to create “an idealized America resting just outside of history.” In McAllister’s eyes, this made Hamilton a transformative musical, as it allowed

100 Freeman, “Will the Real Alexander Hamilton,” 262.
people of color to take traditionally white roles and “make representational room for black artists” on Broadway.\textsuperscript{103}

One example of this was the casting of Leslie Odom Jr., an African American man, as the villain Aaron Burr. Odom’s casting would seem to “reinforce the stereotype of blackness as villainous,” but McAllister argued that Odom’s casting was transgressive because Burr was wealthy, powerful, and privileged, which challenged the social and racial hierarchy.\textsuperscript{104} Nevertheless, McAllister still felt \textit{Hamilton} overreached itself. He did not believe audiences could watch “colored founding fathers rapping, singing, and dancing revolution, while also implicitly reading enslavement” onto those “same colored bodies.”\textsuperscript{105} The job of addressing these historical absences and dramaturgical weak spots would be left to the next generation, who McAllister believed could “arrive at a better, more perfect Hamilton.”\textsuperscript{106}

Many of these critiques were to create a better \textit{Hamilton}. Samuelson thought a better \textit{Hamilton} would have more religion and morality and less feminism. McAllister believed \textit{Hamilton} could only improve when historical people of color were added back into the narrative. However, other scholars did not believe \textit{Hamilton} should change, and instead argued \textit{Hamilton} could be used to have historical discussions with the public. One such scholar was Gordon-Reed, who believed academics needed to have more debates about \textit{Hamilton}’s historical accuracy. Another scholar was Freeman, who argued that the transformation of Hamilton and the other founding fathers into more modern figures in \textit{Hamilton} was an important de-familiarization that

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{103} McAllister, “Toward a More Perfect Hamilton,” 281.\textsuperscript{104} McAllister, “Toward a More Perfect Hamilton,” 286.\textsuperscript{105} McAllister, “Toward a More Perfect Hamilton,” 286.\textsuperscript{106} McAllister, “Toward a More Perfect Hamilton,” 288.\end{flushright}
could be harnessed to educate the public on historical issues in the time period. Of course, these strategies would only be successful if the public was willing to listen.

Conclusion

Hamilton’s continued presence in the public consciousness will lead to continued academic debates about Hamilton. This holds especially true as new productions of Hamilton open, with new casts of color playing different roles. Some of these new casts will theoretically negate the criticisms of black men playing founding fathers, as different nationalities play the roles. New casts should also remove the criticism that the leads read as white. Yet Monteiro still states that even if a different race were to play the lead characters, “the music, as originally written, [was] racialized, and that racialization [would be] shaped by the racial identities of each new cast member.”107 If Monteiro’s criticism holds true, this means that even if Alexander Hamilton is played by Michael Luwoye, a black man, the music is still racialized. Ishmael Reed’s criticisms that only black men play founding fathers is also still relevant, as currently only one non-black man has played a founding father in Hamilton.108 The academic criticisms that Hamilton does not feature historical people of color and deftly avoids slavery will also continue to be true, as the musical’s script is currently set in stone. As to the debate whether Hamilton is good for historians and the American public, the results remain to be seen. However, there are some small indicators the American public is seeking historical knowledge about

According to Google Trends, the query “historical accuracy of Hamilton” experienced “breakout” levels of searching in the past five years, which is quantified as a 5,000 percent increase in searches of that term. Yet in the past year, the term “History – Academic Discipline” would have found very few academic articles on Hamilton. This might be because most academics have already said their piece about the musical. Or it might be possible that these academics are waiting until Historians on Hamilton: How a Blockbuster Musical Is Restaging America’s Past is released. The book will be a compilation of essays by historians on the topic of Hamilton, and with a mix of new and old voices, the academic opinions of over fifteen scholars will be revealed on April 20, 2018 when it is released to the public. The work will hopefully investigate new perspectives on Hamilton and bring the academic spotlight back onto the musical, but it will still be unable to fully calculate the impact of Hamilton on the academic world. For those results, academics will have to be willing to “wait for it”.

Chapter 2: Historic Sites and *Hamilton*

Historic sites did not have to wait for the effect of *Hamilton*. Within a few months of the musical’s debut, sites like Hamilton Grange National Memorial began to see extreme increases in visitation numbers. Other sites, like Yorktown Battlefield, did not see any effect, even though they were directly mentioned in the musical. One of the ways to determine if *Hamilton* affected historic homes was by graphing the monthly visitor data for each site. However, tracking increases on a graph became difficult at sites like Independence Hall and Yorktown, as they both saw anywhere from three million to four million visitors a year. This high visitation meant that a difference of 10,000 people would not be visible on the graph. The solution to this problem was to use statistics, specifically the statistics software JMP. The tool used in JMP was a two-sample t-test, which is a statistical tool used to determine if the difference between two sets of data is significant, or a random coincidence. The two-sample t-test provides a wealth of information, but the p-value is what tells the researcher if the difference is significant or not. The smaller the p-value is to zero, the higher the likelihood that the difference between the two sets of data is significant and not random. In general, any p-value smaller than .05 is considered a significant difference. In this study, the two sets of data are visitor attendance data before and after *Hamilton* debuted. The t-test also helps to smooth out seasonal swings in attendance. In sum, if the p-value was lower than .05, the difference between visitor attendance before and after *Hamilton* was statistically significant, indicating *Hamilton* might have had an effect.

Yet increased, or decreased, visitor numbers can be caused by multiple things. One example of this is in 2016, where many sites received large increases in visitor attendance from
the National Park’s Service centennial celebrations, low gas prices, and the 2016 election, which might have inspired Americans to visit the founding fathers’ homes. That is why email and phone interviews were also utilized to investigate if sites possessed anecdotal evidence of *Hamilton* impacting visitation numbers. In order to keep consistency, the following seven questions were asked of all museum professionals interviewed:

1. Do you feel that there have been more visitors in the past two to three years?
2. Why do you think there have been more visitors?
3. Do you think *Hamilton* has affected your visitor numbers?
4. How have you changed tours to accommodate the increased/decreased visitors?
5. Have you experienced more wear and tear on the site because of the visitors?
6. When did you become aware of *Hamilton*?
7. Is there anything else about your site you think I should know about for my project?

Once these questions were answered, the interviews were transcribed and put into case studies along with the quantitative data from the statistical analysis. From this point forward, each historic site will be presented as an individual case study, with interviews and attendance analysis if they were available.

**Independence National Historic Park**

The Independence National Historic Park is a multi-focus site, with the main attractions being the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. This makes it a very popular site, with around 3.7 million visitors on average each year. However, in 2016, the visitor attendance was at 5,067,510, an increase of over a million. It was unclear if *Hamilton* was the direct cause, as Independence
Hall was never directly mentioned in the musical. Missy Hogan, the chief of Operations for Interpretations and Visitor Services at Independence National Historic Park, had some ideas as to why the visitor numbers were inflated for 2015-2016, as she believed that as a blanket statement, national parks “visitation [had] gone up over the past couple of years.” Hogan also mentioned that the centennial of the National Park Service was in 2016, which meant that “there was a big push to publicize the national parks as a whole.” Specific to the Independence National Historic Park, the site had recently opened a new exhibit, which might have brought in more visitors. However, Hogan also made a point to say the visitors who came to the site had a marked interest in Alexander Hamilton since the musical came out. This evidence was backed up by statistical analysis of visitor numbers, which showed a p-value of .0138, well below the .05 threshold for being a significant difference.

Hogan said that personally both her and her staff began noticing more questions about Hamilton after January of 2016. While Alexander Hamilton was someone regularly covered by the Independence Hall tour, visitors began to come to Independence Hall knowing more about Hamilton after this date, and had begun to ask specific questions about Hamilton’s role at

---

110 Missy Hogan, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018, transcript.
Independence Hall. Questions such as “‘where did Hamilton sit?’ ‘what did he do while he was here?’ ‘what did he do while he was in Philadelphia?’” became common, as did requests for advice on other Hamilton sights in Philadelphia. As a result of the increased interest in Hamilton, Independence Hall created special programming focusing on Hamilton in some of their buildings, which included PowerPoint presentations about Hamilton’s life, a special event for Hamilton’s birthday, an event on the day of Hamilton’s duel in July, and a tour of the Independence Hall’s portrait gallery focusing on Hamilton and Jefferson. Unfortunately, there was no documentation for these events, as many of the programs were short term seasonal tours that tended to happen the day of, which meant not “enough lead time to get it into a publication.” As a result, it was mostly signage posted around the site that brought guests to these Hamilton events. Even so, the events were extremely popular, and anytime a staff member mentioned Alexander Hamilton in an event “blurb”, there was a “tick up” in the attendance of the event.

Much of this special programming was oriented towards teenage girls, which was where Hogan saw the most passion for Hamilton. Hogan was extremely enthusiastic about the power Hamilton had in engaging young teenage girls, stating that “before... if you can imagine the glazed over look of a 14-year-old girl, now they're much more engaged because they know this [history] and they're willing to show that they know the story… I absolutely see [teenage girls] more engaged and more aware of the history, and more willing to talk about the history.” While this testimony did not overrule the fact that the high visitor numbers experienced in 2016 could also be attributed to the centennial of the National Park Service, it did leave open the possibility that Hamilton influenced the visitors who were already at the site. Regardless of whether Hamilton directly influenced visitor numbers at the Independence National Historic Park, Hogan

111 Missy Hogan, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018, transcript part 2.
felt that *Hamilton* had “made the founding fathers cool again,” which allowed the site to better impart the story of Independence Hall to guests who came to the site.

**Adams National Historic Park**

John Adams was also mentioned in *Hamilton*, albeit briefly and unflatteringly. Kelly Cobble, curator of Adams National Historic Park, hypothesized that this was why Adams Park had not seen an upsurge in visitors. According to Cobble, the Adams Park had “very few, if any people, specifically mention the musical” when they visited.112 The visitor attendance would seem to support this, as the average attendance in 2016 (199,301) and 2015 (183,632) was lower than the past average of 227,152. Neither 2016 or 2015 was abnormally low, but it was significant that even with the centennial in 2016 the site did not receive more visitors. Cobble attributed this dearth to the fact that most visitors were lured to the site by books written about John Adams, Abigail Adams, and John Quincy Adams and his wife, Louisa Catherine Adams. This lack of visitors was supported by statistical analysis, as the p-value for the site was .9529, comfortably above the .05 significance marker.

---

112 Kelly Cobble, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 3, 2018, transcript.
Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site

The Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site is the home of Schuyler Mansion, which was where Alexander Hamilton’s wife, Elizabeth Schuyler, lived for most of her childhood. Angelica Schuyler, Elizabeth’s older sister, also lived in the household, as did their sister Margarita (Peggy). The Schuyler sisters were popular characters in *Hamilton*, and as a result of this, the mansion saw large increases in visitor attendance when the musical debuted in 2015. According to Heidi Hill, the historic site manager, the Schuyler Mansion became aware of the increased interest in the site in January 2016, when they began to get telephone calls and email inquiries about tours during the Mansion’s off season. These calls were probably influenced by the *Huffington Post* article entitled “8 Places to Celebrate Alexander Hamilton in New York and Beyond,” which listed Schuyler Mansion as number two on its list. The increased interest led the Schuyler Mansion team to develop a Hamilton themed tour, as there were “all sorts of correspondences and exchanges” in the house between Hamilton and the Schuyler family. Schuyler Mansion tested the “When Alexander Hamilton Called Albany Home” tour in March and April of 2016, and advertised it as a way to “examine Hamilton’s relationship with the Schuyler family, and his connection to the Schuyler family home.” The tour was popular enough to inspire the Albany Institute of History and Art to develop a spotlight exhibit on Hamilton, which opened in June of 2016. This then led the Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau to create a *Hamilton* themed walking tour, with the Schuyler Mansion as one of

---

114 @nicorreia, Nicole Correria, “‘When Alexander Hamilton Called Albany Home’ at the Schuyler Mansion,” *All Over Albany*, February 23, 2016.
the main stops.\footnote{115} Heidi Hill credited the walking tour and the Albany Institute of History for bringing in the majority of visitors in 2016, as the Schuyler Mansion became part of a “package that people could sign up for,” which allowed the Mansion to market itself. However, “those two things went away” at the end of the summer, leaving Schuyler Mansion to fend for itself as more \textit{Hamilton} visitors continued to arrive.

One of the most interesting aspects of these visitors was that they were “not traditional museum goers.”\footnote{116} In fact, the exact opposite group began to come to the site, with middle schoolers and teenagers with their parents beginning to make up the bulk of the tours. These nontraditional guests often came with some background knowledge of the Schuyler family from the \textit{Hamilton} musical, and occasionally became upset when the Schuyler Mansion history did not line up with \textit{Hamilton}’s history. Hill gave a few examples, saying that the Schuyler Mansion

“had a few people come into the house who argue[d] the fact, because they're so in love with the musical and feel that things happened just that way, along that timeline, with those characters… They sometimes [had] a hard time hearing that there were other sisters, and that there were sons… *laughs* So, it's been interesting. Again, those are generally the people who don't come with the history background, who aren't the traditional museum visitor, and they're few and far between. But it's always surprising when people sort of fight…with us, that ‘no, no there were only three Schuyler sisters!’”

However, Hill said these visitors were few and far between, and that for most guests the gap between \textit{Hamilton}’s and the history of the mansion was not an issue.

In fact, Schuyler Mansion actively tried to attract younger and more diverse visitors to the site by hosting Hamilton themed happy hours and scavenger hunts. They also hosted the Alexander Awareness Societies’ four day “Hamilton on the Hudson” event and introduced a new

\footnote{116} Heidi Hill, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 3, 2018, transcript.
tour this past November to capitalize on the *Hamilton* interest. Entitled “Women of Schuyler Mansion”, the tour focused on “Mrs. Schuyler, the other Schuyler sisters who aren’t mentioned in the musical… and the servants and the enslaved women” who worked at the mansion. Yet even as they attracted more visitors, the Schuyler Mansion was still confronted by its low budget and limited opening hours. The Mansion only had a small staff of four part time interpreters during the main season, and their limited opening months were traditionally from May to October, during which they gave hourly tours from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Wednesday through Sunday. While the mansion has not been able to hire more staff, it did appeal to the regional New York Park Service to stay open year round, and was granted permission to open twice a week to give hour long focus tours on Thursdays and Saturdays.

For the upcoming 2018 season, Heidi Hill remained hopeful that visitor numbers would stay high. In 2019, the touring company of the musical will be playing at Proctors Theatre in Schenectady, only a half hours drive from Schuyler Mansion, which Hill anticipated would increase visitation. As for the mansion itself, the increased visitation has not yet had any negative effects, as the flooring installed in the 1920s had successfully limited wear and tear on the historic home. Hill was ultimately grateful for the large number of visitors *Hamilton* had brought to the Schuyler Mansion, and she did not see the “surge in activity dying down” anytime soon. With any luck, Hill hoped that the Schuyler Mansion would continue to be at a “comfortable level for inviting visitors in” for years to come.

---

Scott Houting, head ranger at the Valley Forge National Historic Park, did not feel that visitor attendance had increased because of *Hamilton*, even though Valley Forge was featured in the PBS documentary *Hamilton’s America*. In the documentary, Houting gave a tour of the site to some of the male leads, which included Christopher Jackson (George Washington), Anthony Ramos (John Laurens), Daveed Diggs (Marquis de Lafayette), and Okieriete Onaodowan (Hercules Mulligan). Yet Houting did not believe the increased media coverage led to more visitors, and he said the documentary only led to guests being “more aware that Hamilton was at Washington’s headquarters” at Valley Forge.

The statistical analysis of Valley Forge’s visitor data supports this. With a p-value of 0.3459, it is true there was no significant difference between visitor attendance before and after *Hamilton* was released. However, from a visual perspective, the graph of visitor attendance does appear to indicate a

---

120 *Hamilton’s America*, Directed by Alex Horwitz. 2016. American Theatre Wing/Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), TV Documentary.


122 Scott Houting, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018, transcript.
Slight increase in visitors after 2015, which could be attributed to nicer summer weather, lower gas prices, or a multitude of other non-*Hamilton* factors.

**Schuyler-Hamilton House**

The Schuyler-Hamilton House, run by volunteers from the Daughters of the American Revolution, experienced the opposite effect from its increased media coverage, going from “seven visitors a month” to twenty to thirty visitors per week. The house is relevant to *Hamilton* because it was where Elizabeth Schuyler and Alexander Hamilton began courting in 1780. According to Patricia Sanftner, docent of the house, the numbers settled down to “about fifteen per week” in 2017, although “keeping track of exact numbers” was difficult. Regardless, the increase in numbers from eighty-four people per year to 3,300 people a year was a drastic increase in guest attendance. Sanftner attributed this visitor increase to *Hamilton’s* popularity and her networking, which aggressively promoted the site.

One of the networking connections Sanftner leaned on was her relationship with Renée Elise Goldsberry, who played the principal role of Angelica Schuyler in *Hamilton*. The two had worked together on the soap opera *One Life to Live*, and Sanftner invited both Goldsberry and the other female principals, Phillipa Soo (Elizabeth Schuyler) and Jasmine Cephas Jones (Margarita “Peggy” Schuyler), to come to the house to learn more about the Schuyler-Hamilton history. The *Hamilton* actresses visited the house July 2015, with the *New York Times* tagging along to write an article about the actresses’ experience. A film and camera crew also attended.

---

and took footage of the actresses at the Schuyler-Hamilton House, which later found a home in the PBS *Hamilton’s America* documentary.

These two factors, and the increasing popularity of *Hamilton*, meant that the Schuyler-Hamilton home rapidly became more popular, especially with younger people. Before, “the average age of visitors was about sixty-five,” but post *Hamilton*, the average was around twenty-five, with children as young as three referencing the musicals’ songs.\(^{124}\) Yet besides the influx of visitors, not much else changed at the site. The only accommodation to the new *Hamilton* visitors was to add an hour of visitation on Sundays, and mentioning Elizabeth Hamilton’s other siblings, such as Angelica and Peggy Schuyler, in the tour. Yet Pat Sanftner believed the increased visitors would not fade anytime soon, as Sanftner’s connections to Morristown National Historic Park and the American Revolution National Heritage Trail would hopefully keep the Schuyler-Hamilton house well visited for the foreseeable future.

**Morristown National Historic Park**

The Morristown National Historic Park saw a similar uptick in visitation after *Hamilton* came out. Much like the Schuyler-Hamilton House, the Morristown Park was featured in the PBS documentary *Hamilton’s America*, but the Morristown site was larger and comprised of park areas, a museum, and several historic

\(^{124}\) Pat Sanftner, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 9, 2018, transcript.
buildings. This included Ford Mansion, which actresses Soo, Jones, and Goldsberry visited while filming the documentary. Eric Olsen, a park ranger at the site, mentioned this fact when questioned about *Hamilton*’s impact on the site, and stated that in general, Morristown had seen an increase in visitors who specifically visited because they were fans of Hamilton. However, Morristown did not create an official *Hamilton* tour for the site, even though Olsen did add *Hamilton* facts to his tour when guests were interested. Demographically, Morristown also saw a change in guests, with more high school and college age women visiting and expressing an interest in *Hamilton*, yet these new visitors did not create any increased wear and tear on the site. Overall, Olsen personally believed Morristown had lost visitation since 2015 due to reduced budget and open hours, which seems to be verified by the graph of visitation numbers. However, all that can be said for certain is that the p-value is 0.4504, indicating that visitation after *Hamilton* was not significantly different from visitation before *Hamilton*.

**Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello**

In contrast, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello did experience breakthrough visitation, reaching its highest number of guests in 2016 with almost 460,000 visitors. While some of those guests might have been interested in *Hamilton*, Steve Light, Manager of House Tour at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, did not think *Hamilton*’s popularity was the sole reason for the 2016 high, stating that low gas prices and the 2016 election might also have contributed to the increase in visits to Monticello. Light and his team did notice a definite interest in *Hamilton* in Monticello’s guests however. They quickly took to finding credible ways to work *Hamilton* into their visits.

---

125 Eric Olsen, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018, transcript.
lyrics into the house tours, which allowed them to “immediately identify who on [the] tour had seen or heard the musical.” This increased interest in Hamilton also led the house guides to talk more about Hamilton in Thomas Jefferson’s life, mainly by pointing out the bust of Hamilton in Monticello’s entrance hall.

Monticello also used the increased interest in Hamilton to develop a Hamilton tour, called the “Hamilton Tour Takeover,” which debuted in the spring of 2017. The “Hamilton Tour Takeover” was a special evening house tour that allowed guests to “explore the history of the epic cabinet battles of George Washington’s first administration, learn about the scandals both men faced and discover objects connected to lyrics from the hit Broadway musical.”¹²⁶ Light emphasized that the “Hamilton Tour Takeover” was not a response to Hamilton, even though Jefferson was portrayed “adversarially” to Hamilton in the musical. According to Light, the “Hamilton Tour Takeover” was an opportunity to examine Jefferson and Hamilton’s political disagreements in a neutral way and “to get people to think about the complex…. differing perspectives of history.”¹²⁷

Many of the people thinking about the complex history of Hamilton and Jefferson at Monticello were of a younger generation, something Light and the Monticello guides immediately noticed. Most of the most enthusiastic Hamilton fans were younger teenagers, around middle and high school age, who had brought their parents to Monticello to experience the history behind Hamilton. The new diversity made it a “great intergenerational way to share and explore the history” at Monticello, and allowed the guides to experience “a new way of

¹²⁷ Steve Light, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 9, 2018, transcript.
talking about some of these aspects of American history.”\(^{128}\)

As to the future of *Hamilton* at Monticello, Light said tour guides would likely continue to highlight the Hamilton bust in the entrance hall, and that Monticello offer the “Hamilton Tour Takeover” again when the musical came to the Washington D.C. Kennedy Center in 2018. Light hoped that the *Hamilton* tour in D.C. would once again “capture an audience of people who were enthusiastic about history because of the musical” in the upcoming year and bring them to Monticello.

**Hamilton Grange National Memorial**

Alexander Hamilton’s home, the Grange, was the most directly affected by *Hamilton*, jumping from 20,000 visitors a year in 2014 to 85,000 in 2016, a 325\% increase. While there were other contributing factors, such as the 2016 centennial of the National Park Service, it is unquestionable that *Hamilton* was the main reason for the increase. This is supported by the p-factor being .0001, indicating an extremely significant difference between the visitor attendance.

before and after *Hamilton*’s release. Part of these high numbers were derived from the Grange’s location near the 135th St. subway station, which meant that locals and tourists alike could investigate the house after having seen the musical downtown. The Grange also began receiving bus tours, which meant that buses would arrive and drop off thirty to fifty visitors. While not all these bus guests wanted a tour of the Grange, the house still had to deal with the impact of a large number of people arriving at the site, and at times the Grange would have to station a guard at the door to prevent bus tours “from sending too many people into the building at once.”

According to the head ranger at the site, the Grange “was not designed for the high visitation” it received in 2016. As a result, the Grange created “sign-in sheets and wait lists,” to manage the crowds and added more rangers to staff the period floor, the stairs, and the front desk/gift shop to manage visitor backups. This made flow through the house easier, while also allowing guests more opportunities to ask questions during the self-guided tours. Post *Hamilton*, the content of those questions changed drastically, as many of the guests who came to the Grange were better informed about Hamilton’s overall life. However, these guests were misinformed about the finer details of Hamilton’s life, partly because *Hamilton* took many artistic liberties and “omitted, exaggerated or added [history] for the sake of the story.” One of those omitted facts was Hamilton’s other six children, a common fact the Grange began to mention in its guided tours. The head ranger also said that *Hamilton* fans often had a hard time knocking Hamilton off his protagonist pedestal from the musical, as for many people, Hamilton was a hero. This meant that some guests were interested in hearing that Hamilton was “subject to the same faults and emotions” people in the present-day experienced.129

---

129 Head Ranger at Hamilton Grange, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 10, 2018, transcript.
Many of those new *Hamilton* guests were young women, as seen in other historic sites like Monticello and the Schuyler Mansion. The head ranger stated that pre-*Hamilton*, many of the Grange’s visitors were locals who stumbled on the site while out for walk, or men over fifty who were interested in checking the Hamilton Grange National Memorial off their checklist. This all changed once the musical came out in 2015, and the Grange began to get a “pretty wide demographic spread” of guests at the site. The largest new demographic was young women aged fifteen to thirty-four, especially during the “height of the [*Hamilton*] craze” in 2016. However, the head ranger also stated “a lot of people and groups who have felt marginalized” saw Hamilton as their “poster child” because the musical built up Hamilton’s reputation as an outsider.

In present day 2018, the diversity of the guests has not slowed down, and the Grange is now welcoming *Hamilton* fans who saw touring productions of the show in other states. Great Britain also recently opened a production in London’s West End, although it is too early to determine if it will have an effect on historic sites in the U.S. or the U.K. In the long run, it is extremely likely that if *Hamilton* has a production in the United States, the Grange will experience increased visitor attendance because of its ties to Alexander Hamilton.

**Morris-Jumel Mansion**

The Morris-Jumel Mansion in upper Manhattan was a tangential piece of *Hamilton*, with its only ties to the musical being a dinner party hosted there by George Washington, and a brief stay by Aaron Burr.\(^{130}\) This last fact prompted creator Lin-Manuel Miranda to write some of

Hamilton in the room where Aaron Burr stayed, and the footage of Miranda writing lyrics to Hamilton made its way into the PBS documentary Hamilton’s America. As a result, more visitors came to visit the Morris-Jumel Mansion, with executive director Carol Ward estimating that “half of their visitors [came] because of the show.”\textsuperscript{131} Chris Davalos, the co-interim director, agreed, and said the Morris-Jumel Mansion saw an increase of guests of around 25% to 30% in the past two to three years.\textsuperscript{132} He attributed this increase to the Hamilton documentary and to new “public and family programming that [tied] in the history of the house.” The Morris-Jumel house tour has not changed because of Hamilton, beyond pointing out the chair Mr. Miranda sat in, but the gift shop did begin to sell Hamilton themed merchandise. The Morris-Jumel Mansion had not experienced any “undue stress” on the site due to the increased visitation, but a recent water main burst at the beginning of 2018 meant that the Mansion is now closed indefinitely until repairs are finished.

James Madison’s Montpelier

James Madison was a major character in Hamilton, yet Christian Cotz, Director of Education & Visitor Engagement at Montpelier, did not feel Hamilton impacted Montpelier’s visitor numbers. Instead, Cotz believed the higher visitor numbers at Montpelier could be attributed to more scholarship on James and Dolly Madison, increased tourist travel to central Virginia, and positive press from tourism websites. Much of that press came when Montpelier finished its massive restoration in 2008, which restored the house to its original size and shape

\textsuperscript{131} Associated Press, “‘Hamilton’ fans give historic sites a boost,” CBS News, June 13, 2016.
\textsuperscript{132} Chris Davalos, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 9, 2018, transcript.
from the DuPont family’s alterations.\textsuperscript{133} The most current press for Montpelier came from its new exhibit on the enslaved people who worked at Montpelier, which was entitled “The Mere Distinction of Colour.”\textsuperscript{134} Cotz also discussed the “historic triangle” as a large visitor draw, which is a geographic triangle of historic sites that includes Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Monticello, Highland, and Montpelier, and Washington D.C..

The increased visitors led to alterations in Montpelier’s tours, as Montpelier switched from taking every group individually to timed tours to regulate visitor flow. Montpelier also worked to make their tours more consistent, both in time and in content, which kept “the brain of the visitors moving through at a steady pace” and provided consistent tour information.\textsuperscript{135} The increased visitors did lead to more wear and tear on the site, such as handrails and bannisters becoming scratched from wedding rings, which made precautions such as ‘visitor carpeting’ essential to prolonging the life of the house.

While Montpelier did not release their visitor numbers, Cotz revealed that Montpelier on average received almost 80,000 visitors a year, and that in 2016 the numbers were slightly higher. Cotz also said that many historic sites around Virginia experienced higher numbers in 2016, which could have been caused by Hamilton. Yet Hamilton was also popular in 2017, which would not correlate with Montpelier’s low numbers. Cotz blamed the low 2017 numbers on bad summer storms that rolled through the area, and the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA. This decline in visitor numbers in 2017 makes a connection to Hamilton

\textsuperscript{133} “Montpelier Foundation History,” James Madison’s Montpelier.
\textsuperscript{135} Christian Cotz, interview by Charlotte Skala, January 11, 2018, transcript.
unlikely, and coupled with Cotz’s lack of anecdotal evidence about *Hamilton* fans at Montpelier, it seems unlikely that *Hamilton* impacted visitor attendance at this site.

**Benjamin Franklin House, London**

The Benjamin Franklin House in London was the only site with *Hamilton* ties in the U.K., yet those are tenuous at best, as Benjamin Franklin never appeared in the musical. Even so, the site began to see some visitors from *Hamilton* when the musical opened in London in late 2017, as fans of *Hamilton* began to come to the site to learn more about American history after they saw the show. According to Márcia Balisciano, director of the Benjamin Franklin House, the Benjamin Franklin House planned on getting in touch with the *Hamilton* marketing team in London “to see if there [were] opportunities to collaborate,” which would hopefully bring in more guests in 2018.136

**George Washington’s Mount Vernon**

At George Washington’s Mount Vernon, there was no need to bring in more guests by marketing *Hamilton*. The site already received on average a million visitors per year, and Mount Vernon recently changed its tours to accommodate them.137 On high capacity days, where large amounts of tours and school groups were projected, Mount Vernon utilized a “highlights mode” in the mansion tours, which moved larger groups through the house at a more rapid pace. These

---

136 Márcia Balisciano, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 11, 2018, transcript.
137 “About,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*. 
larger groups did not create “substantially different” wear and tear on the house or the site, but there was sufficient enough daily damage that the collections and preservation teams inspected the mansion each day.\textsuperscript{138}

In regard to Hamilton, George Washington’s Mount Vernon did not create any new tours or events at the site. However, the Mount Vernon website did have several online articles about Hamilton and Washington’s relationship, as well as an educator’s page with resources to connect Hamilton and George Washington. Mount Vernon also planned on hosting a “pop-up Hamiltunes event” at Mount Vernon in early June to coincide with Hamilton’s arrival in D.C. at the Kennedy center. It is also worthwhile to note that the PBS documentary Hamilton’s America filmed several scenes at Mount Vernon with Christopher Jackson, who played George Washington in the musical. Mount Vernon later asked Jackson to be the narrator for their new Be Washington exhibit, which opened in early 2018 and advertised Jackson’s Hamilton ties.\textsuperscript{139} Otherwise, George Washington’s Mount Vernon did not heavily advertise Hamilton and seemed unaffected by the musical.

Colonial National Historic Park – Yorktown Battlefield

The Yorktown battlefield site is part of the larger Colonial National Historic Park in Virginia, which is also home to Historic Jamestowne. Robbie Smith, a park ranger at the site, believed *Hamilton* “captured the imagination of a large audience and ignited further interest in Alexander Hamilton.” Smith was confident his fellow rangers would “come to the same conclusion,” but could not provide any specific statistical data to back up his claim.140 Unfortunately, there was no data to back up his claim, as the p-value was .8304 and proved Yorktown did not see a significant increase in visitors after *Hamilton* was released. This is curious however, as the song “Yorktown (World Turned Upside Down)” is a turning point in the musical and was featured at the 2016 Tony Awards.

Fraunces Tavern-Museum

The Fraunces Tavern-Museum is a small colonial building in lower Manhattan that was featured in several articles as a place to visit if someone was interested in *Hamilton*. More *Hamilton* connections included Lin-Manuel Miranda using the restaurant as a place to write

---

140 Robbie Smith, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 16, 2018, transcript.
during the creation of *Hamilton*, and the Tavern was used as the setting for the song “Story of Tonight” in the musical.\(^{141}\) The *New York Times* even conducted an interview with *Hamilton* cast members Daveed Diggs, Christopher Jackson, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Leslie Odom Jr. in the restaurant.\(^{142}\) Jacqueline Masseo, Director of Education & Public Programs at the Fraunces Tavern-Museum, said this press coverage led to public programming tripling at the museum since *Hamilton* came out.\(^{143}\) Some of the programming included a *Hamilton* themed scavenger hunt and *Hamilton* themed lectures, such as “Alexander Hamilton: Spymaster.” Similar to other sites, Fraunces Tavern did not experience any increased wear and tear on the site due to the increased visitation, and it was likely that the proximity to *Hamilton* on Broadway led to the large increase in visitors.

**Federal Hall National Memorial**

Federal Hall National Memorial is also located in lower Manhattan, and is easily walkable from Fraunces Tavern. This building was the site of George Washington’s inauguration, but the *Hamilton* connection got Federal Hall’s name on *Hamilton* must see lists on

---


\(^{143}\) Jacqueline Masseo, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 24, 2018, transcript.
However, a park ranger at the site did not believe *Hamilton* impacted the site, even though there was a significant change in visitation after Hamilton debuted. This is backed up by statistical analysis, which shows an extremely significantly p-value of .0001, a value equivalent to the increase at the Hamilton Grange National Memorial. However, the ranger believed the opening of the 9/11 memorial in 2011 was the cause of the increased visitation.

In a follow up question, the ranger suggested that visitation might have increased because there were more staff members to count visitors and because the site was open Saturdays “from Memorial Day to Labor Day in 2016.” Federal Hall did not alter its tours for the increased visitors, but the site did experience increased maintenance costs for cleaning supplies and toilet paper.

What was most strange about this site is that Federal Hall does not associate the huge increase in visitor attendance to *Hamilton*, even though it occurred after the musical opened on Broadway. Another factor for the increase not mentioned by the ranger might have been the campaign in 2016 for the anniversary of the National Park Service. Maybe visitors were also

---

145 Park ranger from Federal Hall, email interview by Charlotte Skala, January 17, 2018, February 6, 2018 transcript.
drawn to the site because of its free bathrooms and close proximity to tourist attractions, like the New York Stock Exchange. Or perhaps Hamilton did bring visitors in droves to the site, and the ranger did not ask the guests why they visited. Regardless, Federal Hall experienced a significant increase in visitors after August 2015, and the numbers have remained high while Hamilton has been on Broadway.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Hamilton’s effect on historic homes seemed to be stronger when the homes were directly connected to the musical or associated with popular characters in the musical. This was particularly true for smaller sites like the Schuyler-Hamilton house, which went from eighty-four people a year to over a thousand a year simply by having Schuyler-Hamilton in the name of the site. Schuyler Mansion and Hamilton Grange were similarly impacted, even though Hamilton Grange had a slight advantage due its location in Manhattan. Hamilton’s effect seemed to be less powerful on medium and large sized sites, as sites like Yorktown and Valley Forge were too far away or too tangential for Hamilton fans to visit in large numbers. This was especially true for sites like the Adams National Historic Park, which saw a decrease in attendance throughout 2016 and 2017. The only exception to the large sites was Independence Hall in Philadelphia, which had strong anecdotal evidence supporting Hamilton interest in the site, as well as strong increased visitation numbers. However, the numbers for any of these sites are not concrete evidence, as increased visitation could also have been caused by the National Park Service’s centennial celebrations or the 2016 election. Keeping
this in mind, the anecdotal evidence and the significant increase in visitor attendance strongly
suggests that small historic sites associated with *Hamilton* were affected by the musical.
Conclusion: Scholars and Sites

Of course, it is impossible to know the full effect of *Hamilton* while the show is ongoing. As of January 2018, *Hamilton* has a show on Broadway, two touring productions in the U.S., a production in Chicago, and a newly opened West End production in the U.K. Creator Lin-Manuel Miranda also keeps interest in *Hamilton* high by regularly releasing new *Hamilton* music. Meanwhile, young people in the United States continue to grow up with *Hamilton* and its cast of color as historical reference points, even if they are not always accurate. These inaccuracies are what academics are worried about. *Hamilton* told Americans it was acceptable to visualize the founding fathers as black and brown, even though the founding fathers held historical black and brown people in bondage. *Hamilton* also neglected to mention many of the historical people of color in the story of America’s founding, from the enslaved at Mount Vernon to the free people of color fighting side by side with the more famous white revolutionaries. That is why academics felt a duty to educate the public on the true histories of *Hamilton*, even if historians like Isenberg felt the public were not willing to listen. Yet the high online traffic at *History @ Work* after it published articles debating the historical accuracy of *Hamilton* suggested the public were willing to listen.

The public was also willing to seek out information about the history behind *Hamilton* at historic sites. Sites closer to the show both geographically and historically received the most attention, such as the Hamilton Grange National Memorial and Schuyler Mansion. Sites like these also received the task of reeducating the public about the true histories of the characters in the show. The Grange was in charge of informing visitors that Hamilton was not as abolitionist as the musical portrayed him, and Schuyler Mansion had to correct the number of Schuyler
children from three to fifteen. Historic sites with large enslaved populations, like Monticello and
Mount Vernon, also had to remind *Hamilton* fans that the founding fathers owned hundreds of
enslaved people, even though they were not featured in *Hamilton*. While this is not a perfect
solution to the problems academics have with *Hamilton*, it does indicate that the public is curious
about the history behind *Hamilton* and is willing to learn.

The public’s willingness to learn about history is ultimately what *Hamilton* is all about. It
is true that the history in *Hamilton* is wrapped up in catchy tunes and powerful raps, but the
public has an obvious interest in American history even without a musical format. *Hamilton* is a
powerful force for historic sites and education, and if the weaknesses pointed out by academics
are taken into account, *Hamilton* can revolutionize the way early American history is taught
around the world.
Appendix: Historic Sites Statistical Data

In analysis, before is January 2013 to July 2015, the dates before Hamilton was released on Broadway, and after is August 2015 to December 2017, when Hamilton was released on Broadway.
Oneway Analysis of Independence Hall Recreational Visitors By Column 10

Skala 73

Oneway Anova

Summary of Fit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rsquare</td>
<td>0.100002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj Rsquare</td>
<td>0.084484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root Mean Square Error</td>
<td>1423369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean of Response</td>
<td>3558784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations (or Sum Wgts)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

t Test

Before-After

Assuming equal variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-93360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Err Dif</td>
<td>36777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper CL Dif</td>
<td>-19745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower CL Dif</td>
<td>-168070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Prob &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.306e+11</td>
<td>1.306e+11</td>
<td>6.4465</td>
<td>0.0138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.1754e+12</td>
<td>2.027e+10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.306e+11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means for Oneway Anova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Error</th>
<th>Lower 95%</th>
<th>Upper 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>404110</td>
<td>26435</td>
<td>351195</td>
<td>457026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>310748</td>
<td>25986</td>
<td>25986</td>
<td>361928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Std Error uses a pooled estimate of error variance
Oneway Analysis of John Adams Recreational Visitors By Column 10

Summary of Fit
- R-squared: 0.00015
- Adj R-squared: -0.01709
- Root Mean Square Error: 18203.57
- Mean of Response: 18350.45
- Observations (or Sum Wgts): 60

T Test
Assuming equal variances
- Difference: -4304.1
- t-Ratio: -0.09342
- Std Error Diff: 4702.8
- Upper CL Diff: 89742
- Prob > |t|: 0.9259
- Lower CL Diff: -98529
- Prob < t: 0.5371
- Confidence: 0.95

Analysis of Variance
- Source: Column 10
- DF: 1
- Sum of Squares: 2892228.9
- Mean Square: 2892228.9
- F Ratio: 0.0087
- Prob > F: 0.9259
- Source: Error
- DF: 59
- Sum of Squares: 19222.e-10
- Mean Square: 3.31369885
- Source: C. Total
- DF: 59
- Sum of Squares: 19222.e-10

Means for Oneway Anova
- Level: After
- Number: 29
- Mean: 33803
- Std Error: 11821
- Lower 95%: 25354
- Upper 95%: 24999
- Level: Before
- Number: 31
- Mean: 181481
- Std Error: 326935
- Lower 95%: 17604
- Upper 95%: 24999

Std Error uses a pooled estimate of error variance
Oneway Analysis of Yorktown Recreational Visitors By Column 10

Summary of Fit
- R-squared: 0.000797
- Adj. R-squared: -0.01648
- Root Mean Square Error: 93985.79
- Mean of Response: 275563.4
- Observations (or Sum Wgts.): 60

Analysis of Variance
- Source: Column 10
- Sum of Squares: 408629546
- Mean Square: 408629546
- F Ratio: 0.0463
- Prob > F: 0.8304

Means for Oneway Anova
- Level: After
  - Number: 29
  - Mean: 270262
  - Std Error: 17453
- Level: Before
  - Number: 31
  - Mean: 273039
  - Std Error: 16880

Std Error uses a pooled estimate of error variance

Skala 75
Oneway Analysis of Valley Forge Recreational Visitors By Column 10

![Graph showing distribution of visitors before and after a column change.]

### Oneway Anova

#### Summary of Fit

- Rsquare: 0.015329
- Adj Rsquare: -0.00165
- Root Mean Square Error: 73970.89
- Mean of Response: 178109.9
- Observations (or Sum Wgts): 60

#### t Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Error</th>
<th>Lower 95%</th>
<th>Upper 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49405.90</td>
<td>123.67</td>
<td>13735</td>
<td>159967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.1736e+11</td>
<td>5.4717e+9</td>
<td>214979</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Analysis of Variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Prob &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49405.90</td>
<td>4.9406e+9</td>
<td>0.9029</td>
<td>0.3459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.1736e+11</td>
<td>5.4717e+9</td>
<td>214979</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Means for Oneway Anova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Error</th>
<th>Lower 95%</th>
<th>Upper 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>187483</td>
<td>13735</td>
<td>159967</td>
<td>214979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>169324</td>
<td>13288</td>
<td>142730</td>
<td>195918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Std Error uses a pooled estimate of error variance.
One-way Analysis of Morristown Recreational Visitors By Column 10

Summary of Fit

- R-squared: 0.003857
- Adj R-squared: -0.00721
- Root Mean Square Error: 8987.712
- Mean of Response: 21817.67
- Observations (or Sum Wgts): 60

T Test

- Before-After: 
- Assuming equal variances
  - Difference: 1687.6, t: 58, Prob > |t|: 0.759863
  - Upper CL Diff: 61339, Prob > u: 0.4504
  - Lower CL Diff: -27583, Prob > l: 0.2252
  - Confidence: 0.95, Prob < t: 0.7748

Analysis of Variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Prob &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>426834437</td>
<td>42683444</td>
<td>0.5774</td>
<td>0.4504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4287388075</td>
<td>7392056</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4330081519</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means for One-way ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Error</th>
<th>Lower 95%</th>
<th>Upper 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20945.8</td>
<td>1596.6</td>
<td>17750</td>
<td>24142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22833.6</td>
<td>1544.2</td>
<td>19543</td>
<td>25725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Std Error uses a pooled estimate of error variance.
One way Analysis of Federal Hall Recreational Visitors By Column 10

Summary of Fit
- Rsquare: 0.427951
- Adj Rsquare: 0.418068
- Root Mean Square Error: 752.1923
- Mean of Response: 18304.18
- Observations (or Sum Wgts): 90

t Test
- Before-After
  - Assuming equal variances
    - Difference: -12.800
    - t Ratio: -5.5871
    - Std Err Dif: 1.943
    - Upper CI Dif: -910
    - Prob > |t|: <0.001*
    - Lower CI Dif: -16590
    - Prob > t: 1.0000
    - Confidence: 0.95

Analysis of Variance
- Source: DF, Sum of Squares, Mean Square, F Ratio, Prob > F
  - Column 10: 1, 2454972161, 2454972161, 43.3399, <0.0001*
  - Error: 58, 3281601110, 5657329
  - G. Total: 59, 5756573271

Means for One way ANOVA
- Level: Number, Mean, Std Error, Lower 95%, Upper 95%
  - After: 29, 249177, 1396.8, 22122, 27714
  - Before: 31, 121174, 1351.0, 9413, 14822

Std Error uses a pooled estimate of error variance
Bibliography


Hamilton Grange. “Recreation Visitors by Month Hamilton Grange NMEM.” *National Park Service*. [https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Recreation%20Visitors%20By%20Month%20(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=HAGR](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Recreation%20Visitors%20By%20Month%20(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=HAGR)


“Montpelier Foundation History.” James Madison’s Montpelier. https://www.montpelier.org/about/foundation


