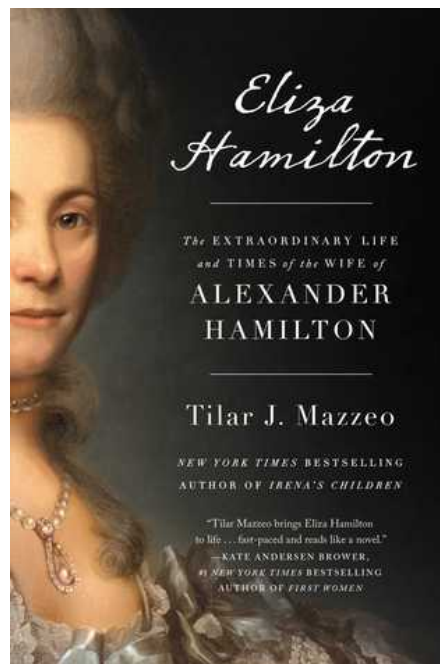




Eliza Hamilton: The Extraordinary Life and Times of the Wife of Alexander Hamilton

Tilar J. Mazzeo

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Irena's Children* comes a comprehensive and riveting biography of the extraordinary life and times of Eliza Hamilton, the wife of founding father Alexander Hamilton, and a powerful, unsung hero in America's early days.

Fans fell in love with Eliza Hamilton—Alexander Hamilton's devoted wife—in Lin-Manuel Miranda's phenomenal musical *Hamilton*. But they don't know her full story. A strong pioneer woman, a loving sister, a caring mother, and in her later years, a generous philanthropist, Eliza had many sides—and this fascinating biography brings her multi-faceted personality to vivid life.

Eliza Hamilton: The Extraordinary Life and Times of The Wife of Alexander Hamilton follows Eliza through her early years in New York, into the ups and downs of her married life with Alexander, beyond the aftermath of his tragic murder, and finally to her involvement in many projects that cemented her legacy as one of the unsung heroes of our nation's early days. Featuring Mazzeo's "impeccable research and crafting" (*Library Journal*), and perfect for fans of the richly detailed historical books by Ron Chernow and Erik Larson, *Eliza Hamilton* is the captivating account of the woman behind the famous man.

Eliza Hamilton: The Extraordinary Life and Times of the Wife of Alexander Hamilton Details

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From Reader Review Eliza Hamilton: The Extraordinary Life and Times of the Wife of Alexander Hamilton for online ebook

Joelle says

This was an intriguing glimpse into the lives of Eliza Hamilton and her Revolutionary peers. I'm glad that while this is a biography of Eliza there was a plethora of information about the people who influenced her life and times. I've seen plenty about Eliza's relationship with her husband and sisters, but this book gave me a much more complete picture of her life. I was fascinated by the historic figures she interacted with as well as her unique part of establishing the United States of America. I highly recommend this biography to American history enthusiasts as well as fans of Hamilton.

*I received an advanced copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

Holly says

This is a hard one to rate, simply because I almost feel like it should be under historical fiction rather than Biography. I know there are not a lot of source materials from Eliza herself, but I did not like how the author would infer or state things about Eliza that she actually has no way of knowing. For example, saying that Eliza blushed. Really? How did she know that? I think the author took a lot of leeway. Also, the theory the author raises around the Maria Reynolds scandal is interesting and she does have some good arguments for why it could have happened the way she states. But I feel like it was a little too one-sided and maybe the author ignored or did not explore other historical documents that back up the traditional story. She was too focused on making her point to address other historical facts that may not have validated her theory. Also, Eliza lived for 50 years after the death of Alexander. But the author does not spend much time on those 50 years. It is almost as if Eliza's life only mattered while she was married to Alexander.

Michael Denton says

It's a quick read but you quickly tell that the author makes up for the lack of source material on Eliza by filling in the blanks herself. While it's nice to have the perspective of Eliza and what was going on at home for Alexander there are many times where the read has to ask "how would this author know that?" This would be fine except for her main theory on the Reynolds Pamphlet. This argument is poorly made and relies solely on interpreting Eliza's behavior instead of attempting to make an argument based on the texts. It's then treated as undisputed fact for the rest of the book, to great annoyance.

Bea Lynch says

I am so disappointedly underwhelmed by this book. As an American Revolution scholar, and Hamilton fan, I was thrilled to see that Eliza finally had her own biography. However, Mazzeo's citations are limited, and she admits in the notes that she is not writing a "dissertation." Regardless, the creative liberties the author takes bring to question "what is fact?" Mazzeo imagines the unseen interactions between Eliza and her family in ways that can never be proven, and while this brings these historical figures to life, it also leaves space for

her to tell half truths and project the narrative the author wants to tell. While I want to believe her, the facts to back up her claims are just not thoroughly provided. I look forward to a more substantiated biography on this wonderful founding mother one day.

Margaret Sankey says

Mazzeo explores the life and context of Eliza Hamilton--her family network of wealthy Dutch patroons, the American Revolution, her sketchy in-laws (Angelica and Cornelia picked creeps with whom to elope), the financial boom of the 1790s, Hamilton's status as an outsider favorite of the Washingtons and user of the Schuyler network, the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia and the four decades of widowhood and philanthropy. This is well-researched, but popularly formatted with references in the back, which makes weighing the author's interpretation of things difficult, especially an assertion that the Maria Reynolds affair was cover for financial scandal, not a sexual infidelity.

Katelyn says

I loved this super readable biography of Eliza Hamilton. For anyone who can't get enough of the Hamilton craze, or just wants to learn more about a strong woman coming of age with America, this is a great read.

My one caveat is that it's told in such a wonderfully readable style (it's not dry at all), that I was a little uncomfortable with the author authoritatively saying what Eliza's reactions to events, etc were. I wish there was more source material from Eliza herself. However, there's just so much you can know about someone and how they felt. I'm glad that I was able to read a biography about Eliza Hamilton. I'd love more on the Schuyler sisters.

Leslie Goddard says

What a disappointment. I was so excited to think that at last there would be a biography of Eliza Hamilton. Nope. This is NOT a biography

Heather says

Reading this was an absolute waste of time & I do not understand how the term "biography" can be attached to this. Biographical fiction? Yes. But this is not a biography.

The way the author wrote this was incredibly frustrating, starting with the first sentence on the first page: "Eliza blushed. It was a beautiful letter." After reading the first page, I actually checked to make sure this was a biography and not another fictional account of her life. The rest of the book continued this way, with the author filling in holes with her own ideas of what Eliza would have said or done in a situation, based on what little we know of her. There aren't a lot of primary source documents authored by Eliza, so most of what the author relies on are other peoples REACTIONS to her letters & actions. Yes, you can make inferences from that, but the fact is that since we don't have letters or diaries from Eliza for the bulk of her life, most of what is written here is sappy conjecture.

The theory about the Maria Reynolds scandal was also a bit over the top. (view spoiler) Is that theory true? Maybe. But in making this theory look better, she deliberately left out information about Maria Reynolds that other historians have included in their telling of these events: like the affidavit from the son of Maria's first land lady in Philadelphia, attesting to her wild mood swings & that she would "insinuate herself on certain high & influential characters". In his statement he also stated that the Reynolds' slept in separate beds when they moved to new lodgings, and that "gentlemen left letters in her entryway" and "at night she would fly off as supposed to answer their contents". She also fails to mention that Maria Reynolds went on to marry Jacob Clingman (before her divorce was finalized), who was a friend of James Reynolds, and was arrested with him. But none of this is ever mentioned. She gives the Hamilton Musical version of the affair, and then spends a good chunk of the book giving validation to her theory.

But my biggest issue with this book is the amount of time that her post Hamilton life receives: 53 pages. She lived without him for almost 50 years. This section of her life deserves more than a pathetic 50 pages.

Laura says

Shoddy research, questionable sources, fictionalized passages, and numerous claims without proof/sources. I can't finish this book because the author clearly isn't trustworthy. This is highly disappointing. Eliza deserves better. I hope somewhere there is a scholar writing a better biography of her remarkable life, because I eagerly await being able to read it.

Kathi Johnson says

I can't understand the high ratings this book has garnered or why it is classified as a biography. The research is sloppy and the fictionalized additions by the author don't add to the book's credibility. The book's publication soon after the Hamilton musical's amazing success makes me question the timing and perhaps the author's motivation in writing the book. Eliza Hamilton was an intriguing personality in history and deserves a proper biography.

Kathleen says

The author used research which she then fleshed out into the story of Eliza Hamilton's life. The beginning of the book was about her childhood and then about a third of the way through the book, the scandals started. If you like books about the ways of the world in those days with the balls and the limited opportunities for women, you will enjoy this book. If you liked the musical, then you may be interested in this.

I'm not a fan of reading most historical tales, whether fiction or non or of reading stories set in this era. It was good for what it was and my rating is based on my interests.

(I received this in a goodreads giveaway.)

Alexandria Palombo says

This book gets two stars because of the subject matter - I'd never rate anything involving Eliza Hamilton lower. If you want to read this biography please understand, though, that it is NOT a biography. This is a work of historical fiction couched as a biography by an author riding on the coattails of Miranda and Chernow. The front cover praise indicates that it "reads like a novel" and it does, because it is. I don't see how a proper historian writes a biography that focuses almost entirely on how Eliza thought and felt, without historical proof of these things that are unknowable. Far too many creative liberties were taken by the author in filling in historical gaps with her ideas about what Eliza must have done or thought in private, undocumented moments. I'd love to read a true biography about this woman, but this sadly wasn't it. I wouldn't recommend anyone else paying for this book that was clearly only written in an attempt to strike while the Hamilton iron is hot by writing a lazily put together book on a woman who deserves much better than that.

Jan Priddy says

"Aaron Burr was famously louche and horny." What can I say about a sentence combining a high school senior's vocabulary word with slang? Not to mention "a hot bullet tore through Hamilton's abdomen, shattering his rib cage." Nothing actually wrong with either one, except that I found sentence structures like this gave me pause on almost every page.

And then the lines such as: "Those words echoed for Hamilton, who lay very still until he heard the quiet breath of his child sleeping." There is no reference for this interjection of interior thoughts and invisible actions and motivations, it is pure guesswork. The author does this often, beginning the first line of the book! Lots of marginally relevant research cited in direct quotations from letters, but then even more pure conjecture that is not at all believable! I wish, if she had actually wanted to write a novelized version of Eliza Hamilton's life, she had not pretended to be writing history. I wish she had made up her mind to tell what is known or at least make up a better story—instead of pretending to do both at the same time!

By the end I did not like any member of this family. Putting it kindly, Hamilton was a rogue and his wife was a doormat. As one example, Hamilton may have forged letters supposedly written to him by a married woman in order to avoid being prosecuted for financial impropriety. Or maybe, when he publicly confessed the affair, he was not destroying an innocent married woman's life, but telling the truth and only ruining Eliza's life. He left her \$50,000 in debt, in part because he always had her living at some distance from the city where he worked and maybe was having affairs. He praised his wife in letters, =promised for all the years of his marriage that they would be together and they rarely were, though he did manage to keep her pregnant. Perhaps it was Hamilton who was "famously louche and horny." He also bought slaves, and married Eliza for her money, though he did find her biddable and "handsome" but not beautiful. Somehow she managed her family's accounts for years but was completely ignorant of debt or her husband's sexual, political, and money troubles.

What was he thinking? Few of the rich men or wanna-be rich men of his era bear close scrutiny. This was supposed to be Eliza's story, but the 50 years she lived after her husband's death are covered in a snap. I was kind of disgusted by the end of it.

Oh: The family tree at the front of the book is helpful but unreliable. Birthdates in particular are not accurate. One couple seem to have birthed their first child when both mother and father were under the age of 7. Eliza's birthdate is listed as a year after her older sister's. I spent a lot of time on Wikipedia verifying relationships and dates. I did learn a great deal reading this book, but I credit my own reading-between-the-lines and independent research more than this author.

Taylor says

So interesting! A great look into her life.

Kim says

I enjoyed this book, but it read as much like a fictionalized account of someone's life as an actual biography, maybe more so. There were many scenes in which Eliza's (and Alexander's) inner thoughts or physical reactions, like blushing or calmly sighing, were stated as fact-- though they couldn't have been known.

The author used a lot of mixed language when talking about enslaved people, some of which does justice to the lives those people were living against their will, but much of which continues to white-wash that part of our history. I expect more out of a book written in 2018.

I'm also incredibly disappointed with how little of this book (the last ~50 pages) was dedicated to the 50+ years that Eliza lived after Alexander Hamilton died. She lived far more of her life without him than with him, and she did some pretty incredible things during that time.

Nonetheless, I understand that Eliza left little original source material and that no one else bothered to keep archives on 18th & 19th-century women. Despite its flaws, this is an enjoyable and interesting read that I'd probably have rated much higher if it was sold as historical fiction instead of a biography.
