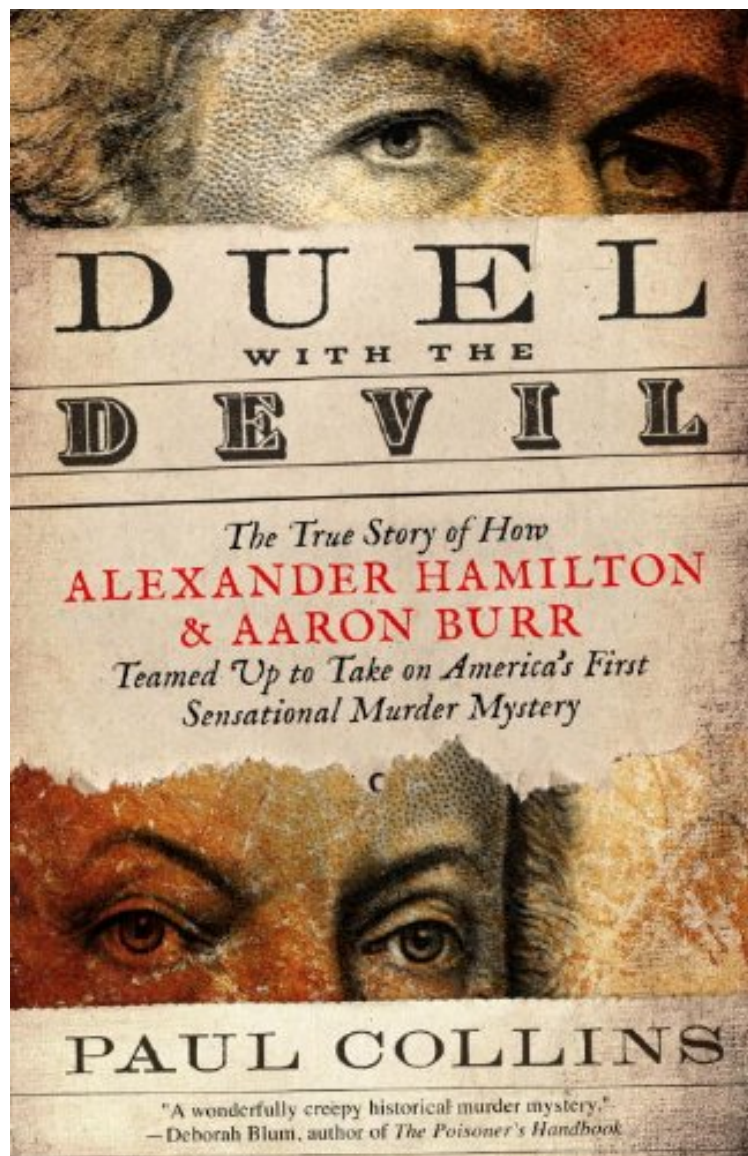


[Free] Duel with the Devil: The True Story of How Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr Teamed Up to Take on America's First Sensational Murder Mystery

Duel with the Devil: The True Story of How Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr Teamed Up to Take on America's First Sensational Murder Mystery

Paul Collins

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Paul Collins : Duel with the Devil: The True Story of How Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr Teamed Up to Take on America's First Sensational Murder Mystery

before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Duel with the Devil: The True Story of How Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr Teamed Up to Take on America's First Sensational Murder Mystery*:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Slow Start, But Stick with It for a Riveting Read! By Peter Hillman
Another captivating, colorful, suspenseful true crime story from the wonderful Paul Collins, who two years ago gave us such a terrific ride in "Murder of the Century." Again, the research is meticulous, sourcing excellent, prose lucid. Personally, Part I and some of Part II (context for the Manhattan Well Tragedy of 1799-1800; sights, sounds and smells of old New York), while well-done and interesting, was a bit of a slog and paled in comparison to the rapid pace that begins in Part III with "The Trial" and continues to the end because one simply cannot put it down! Recommendation: if you find the early parts slow going, go right to Part III. Trial testimony and argument, contradictions and all, provide ample foundation. Definitely read the end notes; there, one learns that the trial stenographic trial transcript (the first of its kind) did not differentiate among Hamilton, Burr and Livingston, the three "pro bono" "Dream Team" defense counsel (Burr and Hamilton were debtors of the defendant's brother). This seems risky, because so much of the action heightens by reading who declared what, and when, but the author's rationale for his educated guess-work seems well-reasoned. Ron Chernow, in his magisterial biography of Alexander Hamilton (at p. 604), presents an edited form of the defense counsel's opening statement, which he confidently attributes to Hamilton because of its grandiloquent and florid style (his words) in contrast to Burr's more workman-like speech. Somehow, this remarkable opening does not seem to appear here, which is too bad, but in no way fatal. Anyone who'd like it re-stated should feel free to leave a comment and this reviewer will happily oblige!
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. History as easy to get down as cherry pie! By weebiscuit
I know that most people don't usually read five star reviews and tend to give more weight to the one star variety, but here goes anyway. I really enjoyed this book! Someone else complained that it started slowly. I thought it started with a wonderful step back in time to Manhattan at the dawn of the 19th Century. I learned many new things... things that we don't always consider when we think of our new democracy emerging after the Revolutionary War. Manhattan in 1799 was really not much more than a large village by today's standards. The author did such a fabulous job of describing the town, discussing the different stores and merchants and how the town was run. He meticulously researched everything as well. His notes at the back of the book, showing which contemporary newspapers and sources he used was impressive! The story is about an unassuming young man, living at a boarding house, who is accused of murdering another boarder there, a young Quaker lady. The evidence against him was extremely flimsy and circumstantial, but as soon as the crime was discovered he was arrested; mainly due to another boarder and the owner of the boarding house pointing fingers at him. What ensues is a trial in which Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton, sometimes on friendly terms with each other but more commonly at odds, are hired as the accused's attorneys. The account of the trial held my attention and was reconstructed from original accounts published by a court reporter. Something interesting I learned was that the court reporter recorded the proceedings in Shorthand! And because of his account of this trial... the first account of it's kind, preserving court proceedings became standard. It was appalling reading about this early trial, concerning the terrible lack of rights that defendants had back then. It made me realize that just because we became a "democracy" when we won our war for independence, it took another 160 years to really understand just what that "Bill of Rights" actually meant, and to form our court system into a more equitable means of justice. Another interesting side-note was the description of the homes of Burr and Hamilton, and both of their financial difficulties; almost to the point of risking going to debtor's prison. And the duel between the two of them, while being something we all knew about, was sort of a "watershed" moment as far as dueling went, because the death of Hamilton was so deplored that the entire concept of dueling, which had already been largely condemned, was now in the forefront of public debate, and caused Burr to flee to South Carolina and then Pennsylvania. This book was simply a great history of a ground-breaking trial, but it was written in such an easy manner that I never felt I was reading a "text." The writer was articulate and easy to understand and follow. I honestly felt transported to 1800, and could see the muddied streets of Manhattan while I read about them. I have not ever read anything else by this author, but he's first-rate and I will definitely pick up whatever else I can find that he's written.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Learn some trivia about American history. By oldmom
My Kindle didn't provide me with the complete title when I started this book and since I'd ordered it some time ago, I wasn't really sure what the heck I was reading. That's not the best way to start a book, but I'm glad I stuck with it. I thought this was one of the best non-fiction books I've read in quite some time. Collins provided some fascinating background in how some parts of the American judicial system developed. He also showed that the court of public opinion is definitely not something new. While it starts out slowly, it lays the groundwork for what will follow. He goes beyond the trial and provides an epilogue of sorts to let you know how many of the major players fared afterwards. As for documentation, I'd have to say this guy used every available source there must be in existence about this case. Some people say this is a boring read; I thought it was wonderful. I learned things about Hamilton that only goes to show no matter how venerated you may be to future Americans, you could still be a "cad" in real life.

The remarkable true story of a turn-of-the-19th century murder and the trial that ensued—a showdown in which iconic political rivals Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr joined forces to make sure justice was served—from bestselling author of the Edgar finalist, *Murder of the Century*. In the closing days of 1799, the United States was still a young republic. Waging a fierce battle for its uncertain future were two political parties: the well-moneyed Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, and the populist Republicans, led by Aaron Burr. The two finest lawyers in New York, Burr and Hamilton were bitter rivals both in and out of the courtroom, and as the next election approached, their animosity reached a crescendo. But everything changed when a young Quaker woman, Elma Sands, was found dead in Burr's newly constructed Manhattan Well. The horrific crime quickly gripped the nation, and before long accusations settled on one of Elma's suitors: a handsome young carpenter named Levi Weeks. As the enraged city demanded a noose be draped around his neck, Week's only hope was to hire a legal dream team. And thus it was that New York's most bitter political rivals and greatest attorneys did the unthinkable—they teamed up. Our nation's longest running cold case, *Duel with the Devil* delivers the first substantial break in the case in over 200 years. At once an absorbing legal thriller and an expertly crafted portrait of the United States in the time of the Founding Fathers, *Duel with the Devil* is a masterpiece of narrative nonfiction.

.com A Few Things You Didn't Know About Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and America's Oldest Cold Case
Manhattan's municipal water system had just debuted when the body of Elma Sands was found in one of its wells in 1800. Now in modern-day SoHo, back then the area was part of "Lispenard's Meadow"—and Greenwich Village really was still a village. Aaron Burr created NYC's water service as cover for a banking scheme that would turn the 1800 election against Alexander Hamilton. Their rivalry had high stakes: Manhattan was the swing district of the presidential election's swing state. Not only did the plan work, Burr's bank ploy took on a life of its own; his Manhattan Company eventually became Chase Manhattan. Hamilton and Burr were also the city's top lawyers, but served together on just one murder case: in defending carpenter Levi Weeks for the murder of Elma Sands. The trial attracted thousands of spectators, and was the nation's first fully recorded murder case. Hamilton's first outing as a criminal defense lawyer was less auspicious. He defended a client charged with dueling—and lost. Defendants in capital cases were rarely allowed to speak in their own behalf; they were considered hopelessly biased. They had good reason to be: conviction for murder earned a sentence of hanging and dissection. The murder trial of Levi Weeks was the longest NYC had ever known; its jury had to be put up for the night in City Hall. Afterwards, both Hamilton and Burr claimed to be the one who figured out the real murderer. Now in the basement of the Il Pozzo restaurant at 129 Spring Street, the infamous Manhattan Well is one of the oldest surviving unsolved crime scenes in the city.