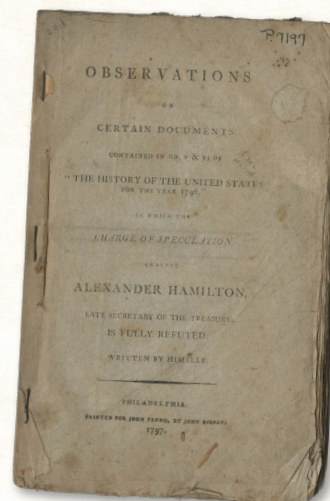


**Observations on Certain Documents Contained in No. V & VI of
“The History of the United States for the Year 1796,” E302.6 H217
H2, 1797**



The fourteenth song in Act II of *Hamilton* is titled “The Reynolds Pamphlet.” The actual name of this document is *Observations on Certain Documents Contained in No. V & VI of “The History of the United States for the Year 1796,” In which the Charge of Speculation Against Alexander Hamilton, Late Secretary of the Treasury, is Fully Refuted*. The pamphlet in the Western Reserve Historical Society’s collections is an original published in 1797 by John Fenno in Philadelphia.

While Secretary of the Treasury in 1791, Hamilton was involved in a two year affair with Maria Reynolds, wife of James Reynolds. When James Reynolds was brought up on charges in a scheme stealing money intended for back wages for Revolutionary War veterans, he threatened to disclose the affair. Hamilton paid \$1,300 dollars (around \$27,000 today) to keep the affair secret.

During this time period we see the beginnings of the two party system with the split between the Federalists led by John Adams and Hamilton and the early Republicans led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Much of the infighting between the two factions would occur in the extremely partisan newspapers of the time, personal attacks were not thought of as taboo.

Through journalist and pamphleteer James Callender, Jefferson’s mouthpiece, the details of the 1791 affair and accusations of money missing from the United States Treasury appeared in a series of pamphlets. Hamilton then published the Reynolds Pamphlet to deny that he stole any money and in which he admitted to the affair with Maria Reynolds along noting that he paid James Reynolds from his own pocket.

If you’re interested in learning more about the history of politics in America, Western Reserve Historical Society has one of the largest ever-growing collections of Presidential campaign memorabilia in the United States. The earliest memorabilia in the collection are commemorative items created soon after George Washington left office in 1797. Currently, some of these items are on display at the Cleveland History Center for guests to enjoy!

