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Hamilton's Secret Father

The Real Scoop on the Origins of Alexander Hamilton

The House of John and Henry Cruger

The house of John and Henry Cruger, a shipping firm engaged primarily in trade with [the English port city of] Bristol and the West Indies, had subsidiary branches abroad managed by the sons of Henry.



Map of Lower Manhattan with Cruger's Wharf just left of center ca. 1778.

Figure 1: Map of Lower Manhattan with *Cruger's Wharf* just left of center ca. 1778.



Henry Cruger, Sr., born 1707

Figure 2: Henry Cruger, Sr., Father of Nicholas Cruger and an influential New York merchant, Henry Cruger was also for many years a member of the New York Assembly and His Majesty's Royal Council for that province.



Figure 3: *John Cruger, Jr.*, uncle of Nicholas Cruger, was a mayor of New York City, member of the Provincial Assembly (he served as Speaker), and first president of the New York Chamber of Commerce. Image: Getty Images.

Source: The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, Volume 1 1768-1778, p. 10, note 5.



Figure 4: John Cruger, Sr.

The brothers, John and Henry Cruger inherited their father's successful business upon his death in 1744. John Sr. died in office while serving as the 38th mayor of New York City.

The special interest that the Crugers showed toward Rachel Lavien Hamilton is an indication that she may have born the child of these West Indies traders. Narrowing the suspected prime candidate among these merchants isn't difficult.

John Sr. died eleven years before Alexander's birth on January 11, 1755.

Mayor John, Jr. who ran the New York headquarters was alive in the spring of 1754, the time of Hamilton's conception. But Rachel conceived in the West Indies and John Jr. was steeped in New York politics at the time about to assume the office of mayor. He was also a "life-long bachelor", a euphemism for gay in those days.

The oldest of Henry Cruger's sons, John Harris Cruger was born circa 1735. In 1754 he would be mature enough but was attending King's College in New York, a school John and Henry helped to found.

Henry Jr. born in 1739, would have been 15 years old in 1754. I think it safe to say he is not our prime suspect as father of Alexander.

Henry's son, Tileman, born c. 1740 is also too young for our suspicions.

Which leaves us with Henry Sr.

Author: Clifford Shack – In a world of illusion, what is historical truth?

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