

TREASURY HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION
April 2018

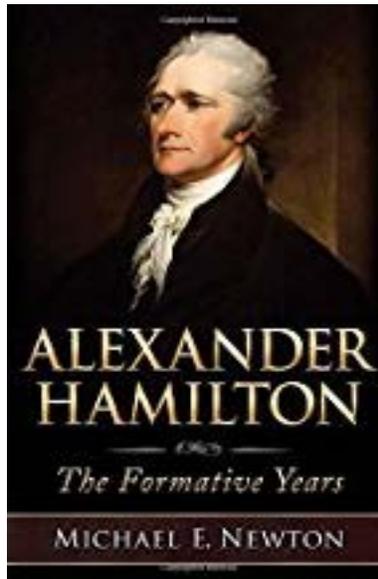
NEWSLETTER

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THA May 16 Lecture on Hamilton's Early Years

The next noontime lecture, slated for May 16, features Michael E. Newton, author of *Hamilton: The Formative Years* and a recognized scholar on the life of Alexander Hamilton. His lecture will focus on his continuing research on Hamilton that has broken new ground with additional discoveries about Hamilton's early life on St. Croix.



Former Treasury employees and others interested are welcome to attend these lectures. However, if you do not possess a Treasury Building pass, you need to arrange clearance into Main Treasury no later than Thursday, May 10. You will need to provide your full name (with complete middle name), date of birth, social security number, city and state of residence, and a daytime phone number. To obtain clearance please provide this information by telephone at (202) 298-0550 or send it to THA@treasury.gov.

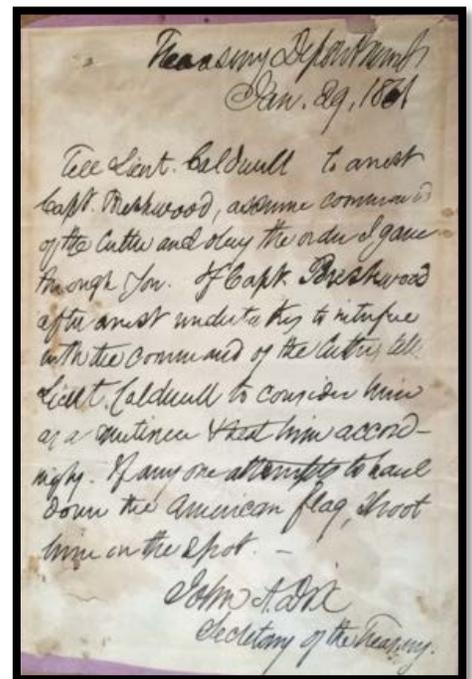
Newton's book will not be available for purchase at the event, but can be obtained on line. The author will be glad to sign copies after the talk.

1861 "Shoot him on the Spot" Letter Given to Treasury

An original, handwritten letter of former Treasury Secretary John Adams Dix was presented to the Treasury Department in a March 9, 2018, ceremony in the Cash Room. Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin accepted the gift on behalf of the Treasury Department from the National Collectors' Mint (NCM), a company specializing in collectible coins, medals and other historical items.

Dix was Secretary of the Treasury from January 15 to March 6, 1861, just a few months before the attack on Fort Sumter. Dix recognized that there was significant and dangerous unrest in the Southern states. Two weeks after his appointment, he ordered the Treasury revenue cutter *McClelland*, under the command of a Capt. Breshwood from New Orleans to safe haven in New York's harbor. After learning that his order had not been obeyed, Dix wrote a scathing letter to be sent by telegraph to a representative of the Maritime Cutter Service**, providing an undoubtedly unexpected strong mandate:

"Tell Lieut. Caldwell to arrest Capt. Breshwood, assume command of the cutter and obey the order I gave through you. If Capt. Breshwood after arrest undertakes to interfere with the command of the cutter, tell Lieut. Caldwell to consider him as a mutineer and treat him accordingly. If anyone attempts to haul down the American Flag, shoot him on the spot."



*[**Note: The Maritime Cutter Service, later renamed Revenue Cutter Service, a bureau of the Treasury Department, was tasked to fulfill many of the duties that today's U.S. Coast Guard and Customs fulfill – enforcing tariff collection and preventing importation of banned goods.]*

Citizens of the Union were very pleased with Dix's strong language in the closing sentence that defended not only the Treasury's vessel, but also the American flag. The "shoot him on the spot" phrase in his letter became a rallying cry during the Civil War years, being emblazoned on banners, printed on posters, engraved in medals and coins, and displayed on buttons. This phrase at the time of the Civil War was similar to "Remember the Maine" a generation later during the Spanish American War and "Remember Pearl Harbor" three generations later during World War II.

At the THA-sponsored event on March 9, the letter was presented by Mr. Avram C. Freedberg, president of NCM and former U.S. Treasurer Angela Marie ("Bay") Buchanan, who is co-director of NCM (along with former U.S. Representative Barry Goldwater, Jr.).

THA's Board Chairman Tom O'Malley provided a brief biographical sketch of Secretary Dix. Dix was born during the first year of President John Adams' Administration and, undoubtedly, was named after the president out of respect for him. At the age of 14, Dix told his father that he wanted to serve in the Army; so, his father, a military man himself, helped his son secure a commission. The younger Dix saw action in the War of 1812, remained in the military for some time, and eventually spent his later years in the New York militia. While on duty in Washington, DC and New York City, Dix studied law and was admitted to the District of Columbia Bar. Shortly thereafter, he returned to New York, where he was appointed as the postmaster; later, he was elected to the New York State Legislature.

O'Malley described Dix as the consummate public servant, working diligently for both the Federal Government and the State of New York. He was appointed by the Governor of New York to serve as Secretary of State of the Empire State. Then he was elected as a U.S. Senator and returned to Washington, D.C.

Appointed Secretary of the Treasury in 1861, by outgoing President James Buchanan, Dix served the second shortest-term as Treasury Secretary-- only about 50 days. He served only two days into President Abraham Lincoln's Administration. (In those days, the

Presidential Inauguration was March 4, not January 20 as it is today.)

It might appear that Dix's appointment as Secretary was expected to be short-termed, perhaps helping in the transition to President Lincoln's Administration. In any case, Dix fulfilled his responsibility with great intent, strength and seriousness.

Upon Dix's departure from the cabinet post, to which Salmon Chase was then appointed, President Lincoln commissioned Dix as a Major General in the Union Army. Although a two-star General, Dix never saw battlefield action during his tour of 1861 – 1865. His assignment was in Maryland and many have given him credit of influencing the State legislature in Annapolis to not secede from the Union and join the Confederacy.

Following the Civil War years, General Dix returned to New York (he preferred to retain the title of "General"). Soon, he was appointed as U.S. Minister to France. After that assignment, he ran for Governor of New York and won that election. When Dix was running for Governor of New York, one newspaper's headlines read: "General 'Shoot Him on the Spot' Nominated for Governor."

Dix lived to the age of 80, died in New York, and is buried in one of the three cemeteries associated with Trinity Church.

The journey of Secretary Dix's letter, which has been authenticated by professional appraisers, has taken almost 9 months to reach the Department. An earlier private owner of the letter, David Alan Gates, had recognized the potential importance of this letter to the Treasury Department. This letter and a number of other mid-nineteenth century documents had been in his family's collection, possibly originating from a great grandfather who had worked in the Treasury Building. Through a mutual acquaintance, he contacted former Treasury Deputy Secretary (later Ambassador to Germany) Robert Kimmitt, who in turn recommended that the owner contact THA's Chairman. Following several telephone and email exchanges between these two, along with a THA-arranged meeting attended by staff of the Treasury Library, the Department's enthusiastic interest in this letter was conveyed to the owner.

After NCM acquired the letter from the earlier owner, the latter informed the company of THA's and the Treasury Department's strong interest in the letter. NCM afterwards offered the gift for either THA's or the Department's acceptance.

The Dix letter will be added to the collection of the Treasury Library, which

was established in 1818. Thus, the letter might be considered a slightly belated 200th "birthday gift" to the Library. This will be a valuable addition to the Library's collection of historic as well as contemporary holdings.

The Library's collection and its professional staff provide exceptional assistance to Treasury research and policy staff, as well as to the general public who visit the facility in the Freedman's Bank Building.

Remembering Barbara Bush

The recent passing of Barbara Bush has brought to mind many meaningful activities and words of wisdom given to the nation by the wife of America's 41st President. Not the least of these was her visit on October 25, 1991, as a representative of her husband George H.W. Bush, for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the restored President Andrew Johnson Suite on the third floor of the historic Main Treasury Building.

Mrs. Bush recognized the historical importance of the room and commended the Department for taking action to restore the room as accurately as possible to its appearance on the day after Lincoln died.

Costumed actors who represented President Andrew Johnson, Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch, Mary Todd Lincoln and other contemporaries, recreated the use of the room as the temporary Presidential Office during the time Mrs. Lincoln remained in the Executive Mansion.



First Lady Barbara Bush, flanked by Secretary Nicholas F. Brady and Mrs. Brady, enjoy the presentation of one of the actors reenacting 1865 events.

The day began with Mrs. Bush being personally escorted from the White House side entrance, across the street, and up the West Side steps to the Bell Entrance by Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady. Both Secretary Brady and Mrs. Katherine Brady, a THA member and volunteer Saturday tour guide, welcomed Mrs. Bush to the Treasury Department and brought her into the Johnson Suite.

After the ribbon cutting, Secretary Brady made a few remarks about the significance of the room. At the end of the formal ceremonies, Mrs. Bush met and talked to many of the Treasury employees invited to the event. She graciously thanked THA officers Abby Gilbert, Tom O'Malley, Jack Flood, and Bart Derrick, and Board members Bonnie Gay and Mark Page. Mrs. Bush spent some time chatting and was knowledgeable about the relationships between the Treasury Building and the White House.

Our THA 1991 Annual Report has six pages on this event if members wish to recall or learn more about the occasion.



Additional Hamilton Events in DC in May

In honor of the 235th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Cincinnati, several free events related to Alexander Hamilton are being held the week of May 15-18. In addition, an exhibition *Alexander Hamilton's American Revolution* will be on view at the Anderson House from March 15 to September 16, 2018.

Tuesday May 15, 6:00 pm, at Anderson House, 2118 Mass. Ave., NW.

Michael Newton will discuss Alexander Hamilton's Revolutionary War service. Hamilton served as an artillery officer, principal aide-de-camp to General George Washington and commander of an infantry battalion during the siege of Yorktown and also saw action in several important battles in New Jersey.

Wednesday, May 16, 6:00pm at the George Washington University Museum 701 21st Street, NW

Nicole Scholet de Villavicencio, co-founder of the Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society, will explore Eliza Hamilton's remarkable life as a "Founding Mother," with a focus on her later life in D.C., where she remained active, including joining with Dolley Madison to raise funds for the Washington Monument. Free, but reservations are encouraged at 202-994-7394. Before the talk, guests can explore

the exhibition [Breaking News: Alexander Hamilton](#). Drawing on historical newspapers from the collection of Antonia M. Chambers, the exhibition highlights key life events and accomplishments of Alexander Hamilton, who played a role in bringing the U.S. capital to Washington, D.C.

Friday, May 18, 2018 12:30 pm, Anderson House

Alexander Hamilton's Society of the Cincinnati Eagle insignia, made in 1784 in Paris. The gold-and-enamel insignia was designed by Pierre L'Enfant and retains its original silk ribbon. Hamilton joined the New York State Society of the Cincinnati at the end of the Revolutionary War and later became the General Society's second president general, succeeding George Washington

City of Brotherly Love Also Loves Hamilton

Hamilton has returned to Philly, the nation's capital during most of his term of office. A special exhibit opened recently at the Constitution Center Museum in Philadelphia on Alexander Hamilton, which will run through the end of the year.

The exhibit is titled "Hamilton: The Constitutional Clashes that Shaped a Nation." It focuses on the many disputes that Hamilton had with his contemporaries, not the least of whom was Vice President Aaron Burr. Included in the exhibit are his letter that questions John Adams' suitability to become President and other representations of his conflicts with Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and, of course, Aaron Burr.

There are many items on display that are on loan from the collections of other historical organizations, such as authentic replicas of the two pistols of the infamous Weehawken, N.J. duel, his portable writing desk, and the 1804 letter from Burr that triggered the duel in which Hamilton was killed.

The Broadway musical "Hamilton" has stoked great public interest in the first Treasury Secretary. This exhibit takes the next step in providing education on greater details of his life, with a variety of pertinent artifacts. There's even a Hamilton interactive trivia show on his early life for visitors as they enter the museum's reception area.

Details, including exhibit tickets and related seminars can be found at www.constitutioncenter.org/visit/visitor-guide

Treasury History Paper Prize

To encourage research on Treasury history, the THA Board established the *1500 Penn Prize* for the best paper on the history of the Treasury Building and/or the Treasury Department. The prize includes a \$250 honorarium, travel expenses to DC of up to \$750, and an invitation to speak in THA's speaker series.

THA has been pleased by receiving 10 submissions of high quality research for the first prize. These are being reviewed and an announcement of the winner is expected soon. The THA lecture is tentatively scheduled for August, depending on the schedule of the prize winner.

This academic prize program will help accomplish one of THA's primary goals by cultivating and rewarding new research on the significance of the Treasury Department to American history. It will also allow THA to connect with the next generation of scholars and identify possible partners for future THA academic outreach efforts.

Development Campaign to be Revised in Summer

THA's Capital Development Campaign was launched in 2007 with its brochure "Preserving a Landmark: Treasury Restoration Projects," which described 14 planned initiatives to restore rooms and spaces in the Treasury Building, to conserve the Department's fine arts and to digitize its archival records.

During the 10-plus past years, thanks to the generosity of THA members and other donors, THA has raised over one-third of a million dollars to give to the Department for many of these projects. Seven of the 12 projects have been either completed or partially completed, either by funding from THA, by a joint public-private effort or by the Department.

THA's successor development campaign will encompass both education and preservation projects, in keeping with the Association's two-fold mission. Some of the unfinished preservation initiatives in the earlier campaign listing will carry over to the successor fundraising effort.

Information on THA's new Education and Restoration Development Campaign will be sent to members during the summer. As in the past, THA will sincerely appreciate all levels of giving to this effort of assisting the Treasury Department in restoring and preserving its National Historic Landmark Building and in enhancing the public's knowledge of the Department's rich history..

THA Committee Assignments for 2018-2019 Term

Following last year's election of THA's Board of Directors, committee chair assignments have been made, with due consideration of each director's interests and experience. The following are the assignments for this new term of office:

Membership – co-chaired by Cora Beebe Fosdick and Alan Wilensky.

Development Campaign – co-chaired by Louis Margaglione and Jeff Wisheski

Lecture Program – Frank Noll.

Newsletter – Jerry Auten

Website – Deval Mehta

Publicity – George Sigalos

New Product Marketing – Gary Grippo

Book and Legacy Ornaments – Tom O'Malley

Oral Histories – Abby Gilbert

Academic Outreach – Mike Caires

Finance – Dave Monroe

CFC – Lori Santamorena

IRA and THA – A Great Pairing

Now that we have filed our income tax return, many of us are trying to plan for the new tax laws that take effect this year. If you have reached the age of 70-1/2, there is permanent legislation that permits you to make donations to charities from your traditional IRA account. Such donations are called "Qualified Charitable Distributions" or QCDs.

Instead of taking the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) as taxable income, after age 70-1/2, individuals may direct their traditional IRA agent to make a sizable donation from the account directly to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. When this is done, the result is that the IRA taxable income amount can be reduced significantly or eliminated completely, depending upon the amount donated to one or more nonprofit organizations. This reduction or elimination of the RMD taxable income is reported on page 1 of the Form 1040 – and the donation amount is not reported on

Schedule A, if you itemize. Instead, it reduces your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) at the bottom of page 1 of Form 1040. And, a reduced AGI could have a beneficial effect on the threshold for allowable medical itemized deductions in Schedule A, as well as your assigned cost for Medicare Part B coverage.

To make a tax-beneficial QCD to THA, you will need to ask your traditional IRA administrator to send a payment of the specific amount to our P.O. Box address that appears in this newsletter. The administrator will undoubtedly require the EIN assigned by the Internal Revenue Service to THA as a nonprofit organization; that number is 23-7389186. Detailed information should be obtained from your tax advisor, the plan administrator for your IRA, and/or from IRS Publication 590-B, page 13.

THA Gift Items

THA's two latest ornaments and some remaining ornaments from the old bureau histories series are available on THA's website along with other THA items appropriate for gifts or personal use. The *Fortress of Finance*, a wonderful book on the history of the Treasury Building, is available on THA's website. This book is also available on eBay and in the TDRA Gift Shop, which recently relocated to across from the Cash Room by the main entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue.

From the Editor:

Our thanks go to Abby Gilbert and Tom O'Malley for contributing articles and Janet Auten for help with editing for this issue. Abby and Tom both contributed to the article remembering Barbara Bush from their personal presence at the event as well as from THA records.

We hope that you will find the THA lecture by Michael Newton and related events and exhibitions about Alexander Hamilton of interest and that some of you will be able to attend.

In future issues, we hope to include short articles and photos about other subjects relating to Treasury history. We would be interested in hearing your suggestions for such articles and from members willing to contribute items of interest to THA members and friends of the Treasury.

Jerry Auten, editor

THA President's Message

After 3 years on the Board, I am starting my term as President and I am looking forward to serving THA in this capacity.

For the first time, we have Board members who are not local to the Washington area. We hope that this geographic diversity will help us to get THA's message outside of our normal boundaries.

Previously on the board, I worked on the redesign of the website and introduced online shopping and collection of dues. Recently, the THA online store went live on the THA website. In addition to the duties of the President, I hope to continue making upgrades to the website.

We are very excited about our progress with the ongoing Educational Documentary Film project. Our film production company completed production of a 7 minute "trailer", which we are planning to post on the THA website. We are currently working to raise funds in order to produce the full film.

I welcome your input and interest in THA activities. Feel free to contact me (deval@treasuryhistoricalassn.org) or any Board member with your questions and input on THA matters.

Thank you for your membership and service to the Treasury.

Deval Mehta, President

**Treasury Historical Association
P.O. Box 28118
Washington, DC 20038-8118**

Message Line: (202) 298-0550

*Website Address:
www.treasuryhistoricalassn.org*

*E-mail Address:
info@treasuryhistoricalassn.org*