

## The Alexander Hamilton Collection of John E. Herzog (1716)

October 25, 2021 EST, Philadelphia

### Viewing:

Exhibition is open by appointment at our [1600 West Girard Avenue](#) location October 8-24. To make an appointment, please contact Colin Foley at [cfoley@freemansauction.com](mailto:cfoley@freemansauction.com).

### Lot 41

**Estimate:** \$8000 - \$12000 (plus Buyer's Premium)

**[Hamilton, Alexander] [Reynolds Pamphlet] Observations on Certain Documents Contained in No. V & VI of "The History of the United States for the Year 1796,"...**

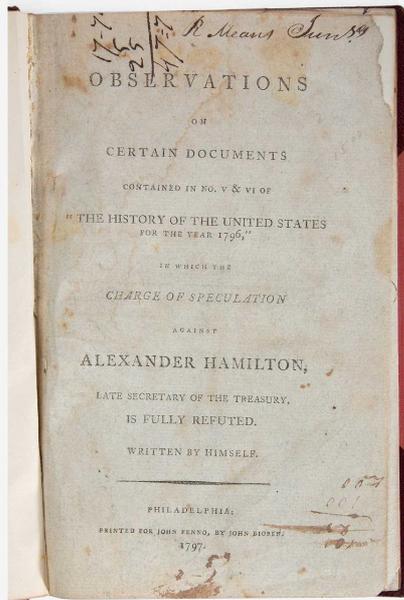
***Rare first edition of the infamous "Reynolds" pamphlet that revealed Alexander Hamilton's affair and subsequent blackmail***

*"The charge against me is a connection with one James Reynolds for purposes of improper pecuniary speculation. My real crime is an amorous connection with his wife, for a considerable time with his privity and connivance, if not originally brought on by a combination between the husband and wife with the design to extort money from me."*

Philadelphia: Printed for John Fenno, by John Bioren, 1797. First edition. 8vo. 37, (1), lviii pp. Three-quarter red morocco over red linen-covered boards, stamped in gilt, joints and corners rubbed; old ownership inscriptions of Robert Means, Jr., and Sr., on title-page and p. (3); scattered soiling to title-page, top corner of same repaired, verso gutter of same reinforced; scattered light spotting to text; final leaf repaired along fore-edge; book-plate of (Alfred E.) Hamill on front paste-down. Evans 37571; Howes H-120; Sabin 29970 (The three citations listed here do not mention any textual variations but after collating this copy against two other copies of the same edition, as well as the 1800 reprint, multiple very minor textual differences were found between all four copies. Priority between the three 1797 copies is as yet undetermined).

First edition of the infamous "Reynolds Pamphlet", published and written by Alexander Hamilton, outlining his affair with Maria Reynolds, and subsequent extortion by her and her husband, James Reynolds. Considered one of the first major sex scandals in the history of the United States. The Hamilton family went to great lengths to acquire and destroy all copies of this first edition.

In the summer of 1791, when Hamilton was nearing the height of his political powers, a young woman, Maria Reynolds, appeared at his doorstep with a tale of abuse and abandonment at the hands of her husband, James Reynolds. Seeking his financial assistance, Hamilton informed her that he would visit her at her home later that night with some money. When he arrived he made what Ron Chernow observes as "one of history's most mystifying cases of bad judgment, he entered into a sordid affair with a married woman...that, if it did not blacken his name forever, certainly sullied it." The affair continued through the summer and into the fall, when James Reynolds reappeared. Though he



appeared angry and upset at the news of their affair, he also sought financial compensation. For the next ten months Hamilton would continue his affair with Maria while also paying James blackmail money under the threat of him exposing the tryst to Hamilton's wife and his political enemies. By November 1792 the affair had ended, when Reynolds, along with Jacob Clingman, were arrested for defrauding the government. In order to secure their own release, they spoke to officials of having proof of professional misconduct committed by Hamilton. The "proof" turned out to be the payments Hamilton made to Reynolds, but in their telling, not for the purposes of blackmail, but instead to secretly peddle in financial speculation. When informed of the payments, Speaker of the House Frederick Muhlenberg, Representative Abraham Venable, and Senator James Monroe confronted Hamilton about the charges. They would be the first to hear Hamilton's own confession about the affair and subsequent blackmail. Satisfied with Hamilton's account, they swore to keep the knowledge of the affair secret, but gossip circulated in small circles in the ensuing years. In June 1797, Scottish émigré and writer James Callender published articles accusing Hamilton of corruption and he also exposed rumors of the affair, possibly through information obtained from Monroe. Hamilton, always quick to defend his name no matter the risk, was left with the choice of staying silent or defending himself, which would entail admitting to the affair and blackmail payments. Against the advice of his friends and closest confidants, Hamilton published the above pamphlet in order to clear his name, but in doing so committed the biggest political blunder of his career. The pamphlet proved to be political fodder for his enemies for years to come, and while it did not destroy his political career, it did limit the scope of his professional possibilities in future. In 1800 his enemies would reprint the pamphlet to keep the scandal alive and prevent anyone from nominating Hamilton for the presidency.