

Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr

By Nancy Isenberg



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From the author of *White Trash*, a controversial challenge to the views of the Founding Fathers offered by Ron Chernow and David McCullough

Lin-Manuel Miranda's play "Hamilton" has reignited interest in the founding fathers; and it features Aaron Burr among its vibrant cast of characters. With *Fallen Founder*, Nancy Isenberg plumbs rare and obscure sources to shed new light on everyone's favorite founding villain. The Aaron Burr whom we meet through Isenberg's eye-opening biography is a feminist, an Enlightenment figure on par with Jefferson, a patriot, and—most importantly—a man with powerful enemies in an age of vitriolic political fighting. Revealing the gritty reality of eighteenth-century America, *Fallen Founder* is the authoritative restoration of a figure who ran afoul of history and a much-needed antidote to the hagiography of the revolutionary era.



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Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr By Nancy Isenberg Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Does Burr belong in the pantheon of founding fathers? Or is he, as historians have asserted ever since he fatally shot Alexander Hamilton in a duel, a faux founder who happened to be in the right place at the right time? Was he really the enigmatic villain, the political schemer who lacked any moral core, the sexual pervert, the cherubic-faced slanderer so beloved of popular imagination? This striking new biography by Isenberg (*Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*) argues that Burr was, indeed, the real thing, a founder "at the center of nation building" and a "capable leader in New York political circles." Interestingly, if controversially, Isenberg believes Burr was "the only founder to embrace feminism," the only one who "adhered to the ideal that reason should transcend party differences." Far from being an empty vessel, she says, Burr defended freedom of speech, wanted to expand suffrage and was a proponent of equal rights. Burr was not without his faults, she concludes, but then, none of the other founders was entirely angelic, either, and his actions must be viewed in the context of his political times. As this important book reminds us, America's founders behaved like ordinary human beings even when they were performing their extraordinary deeds. Illus. (*May 14*)

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From **Booklist**

In this positive portrayal of the controversial Aaron Burr (1756-1836), Isenberg departs from all previous biographers, deploring their lack of basic research. Although she acknowledges that studying Burr is hampered by the loss of his papers in a shipwreck, Isenberg more than compensates by tapping negative publicity disseminated by Burr's political enemies. Comparing their scurrilous reports with private descriptions of Burr as cultured, well liked, and progressive for the times (Isenberg approves him as a "feminist"), the author argues that Burr's reputation was marred not by genuine defects of character but by political competition. And she details the three episodes on which opinion of Burr rises and falls: his tie with Jefferson for the presidency in the 1800 election, his 1804 duel with Hamilton, and his 1807 treason trial. Making a strong case for revising received wisdom about Burr, Isenberg significantly contributes to the history of the early republic. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Review

"Full of insight and new research. An important and engaging account."--New York Times Book Review

"A sterling biography."--Boston Globe

"Isenberg offers justice to a maligned man."--Wall Street Journal

"Isenberg's meticulous biography reveals a gifted lawyer, politician, and orator who championed civility in government and even feminist ideals, in a political climate that bears a marked resemblance to our own."--Washington Post

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Archie Beard:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Guide is very important thing for us to know everything in the world. Each publication has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that book has different type. Some people feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They are really reading whatever they have because their hobby will be reading a book. Why not the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, man or woman feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or perhaps exercise. Well, probably you will need this Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr.

Fred Ashman:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent the whole day to reading a e-book. The book Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book possesses high quality.

Robert Hensley:

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