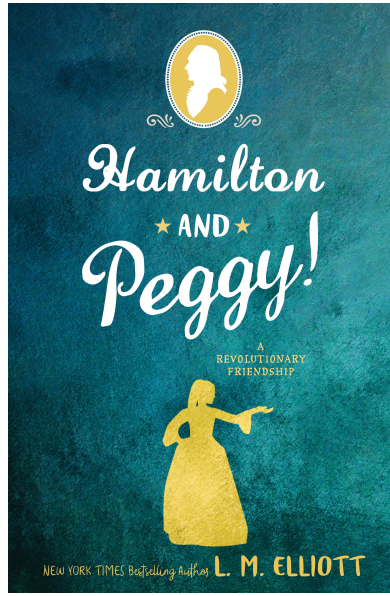


**A Bank Street College of Education Best Book
The Grateful American Book Prize, Honorable Mention**



**WHY USE *HAMILTON AND PEGGY!*
IN YOUR CLASSROOM?**

Historical and biographical novels offer something for which students hunger—*humanizing* the history they must memorize for tests by showing all those wars and political movements through the eyes of an “everyman”—a character who experiences fears, longing, and moments of revelation, a person with whom readers empathize, worry about, and turn each page wondering what happens next. Engaged in a compelling, *well-researched* story, teens learn without realizing it, by osmosis.

That’s what a good piece of art can do for a time period. Look at the cultural phenomenon that is *Hamilton!* As one national education expert said, the American Revolution used to be “the castor oil of social studies,” and now “is the sexiest topic there is.” Fact-filled YA historical fiction featuring an active female protagonist also serves as a powerful complement to the male biographies necessary to teaching the American Revolution, helping teenage girls feel part of the narrative.

Take Peggy Schuyler. Peers called her: *a wicked wit; endowed with a superior mind; spritely; the favorite at dinner parties and balls.* She was well read. Fluent in French. Saved her baby sister from a home invasion by Loyalist kidnappers. And put down by a guy (one of Hamilton’s best friends) who warned she was too insistent on talking politics with men to be truly likeable! Nevertheless, she clearly persisted. Facts show that Peggy Schuyler managed to maintain an independent feminist ideal within 18th century restrictions—a revolutionary in her own right.

Written for young adults who can sing every word of the musical, PEGGY’s narrative speaks particularly to anyone who feels overshadowed by older siblings; any smart-girl who has intimidated male classmates too much with her eloquence to be invited to prom;

and any young woman who wants to join our nation's political debate and/or speak her mind against women being labeled.

Specific areas of history on which PEGGY touches:

Letters reveal that Peggy was the only one of the famed Schuyler Sisters to be in the right place at the right time to witness and potentially aid the work of her father, Philip Schuyler—as commanding general and war strategist during the Northern campaign, George Washington's most trusted spy-master, the patriots' chief negotiator with the Iroquois nations, and liaison with French troops under Rochambeau.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* presents so much of the Revolution's major battles and personas in brilliant and memorable lyrics, which many teens know word for word. *HAMILTON AND PEGGY!* doesn't rehash what's already beautifully sung, but instead uses the musical and Peggy's real life as springboard to explore the fight in upstate New York and oft overlooked elements of the war, such as:

1. The Battle of Saratoga—the Revolution's most important turning point in terms of convincing the French to ally with us. It was Philip Schuyler's spies who discovered the Brits' deadly three-prong invasion strategy, Philip Schuyler who rallied the militia, slowed the British advance, and prepared the patriots to win its first major victory.
2. The critical importance of spying and counter-intelligence in our fight against a far superior force. Philip Schuyler was George Washington's right hand man for espionage, uncovering Loyalist conspiracies and surprise attacks coming out of Canada, and creating false documents to distract the British and hide what GW was *really* planning.
3. The civil war aspect of the Revolution, which pitted against one another Loyalist and Patriot neighbors and individual tribes within the Six Nations of the Iroquois.
4. The importance of the Oneida and Tuscarora to the Patriot cause.
5. The power of letters to debate or woo—shown through letters quoted throughout the novel. Hamilton's are full of poetry, braggadocio, and vulnerability. (The palpable treasures of primary documents!) Plus, how women used letters to influence politics.
6. The use of propaganda. (British General Burgoyne and Americans both purposefully incited panic by threatening "massacres" from the Iroquois allied with the Redcoats and spreading the accusation that Indian warriors murdered a young woman named Jenny McCrea).
7. The plight of refugees fleeing before an invading army.
8. How politics and regional squabbling could create a traitor (Benedict Arnold).
9. The Hard Winter of 1780. How the Continental Army survived at Jockey Hollow and interacted with the people of Morristown.
10. The Hudson River's strategic importance. (great for AP Human Geography)

11. Dancer, wrestler, jokester, spy, dog-lover—the other side of George Washington.

For biographies, background essays, and links to learning more about the Revolution and the real life people in *HAMILTON AND PEGGY! A REVOLUTIONARY FRIENDSHIP* see: www.lmelliott.com or contact laura@lmelliott.com