"Was Alexander Hamilton Jewish?"

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Thousands of miles from the Old World, on a sun-kissed island in the West Indies, a young boy named Alexander Hamilton began a most unlikely journey in the 1750s. His meteoric rise from Caribbean obscurity to American founder has long captivated historians and, more recently, theater audiences. Yet one crucial aspect of Hamilton’s life has remained submerged for centuries: the weight of the evidence suggests that he was in fact Jewish. Drawing on untapped sources in the West Indies, Andrew Porwancher makes the case for Hamilton’s Jewish upbringing and explores his ongoing relationships with Jews throughout his lifetime. This untold story of Hamilton’s ties to the faith and people of Judaism challenges our understanding of both Hamilton and the American Republic he helped forge.

Andrew Porwancher is the Wick Cary Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, where he teaches constitutional history. He is currently on sabbatical as the Garwood Visiting Fellow at Princeton. His third book, The Jewish Founder: Alexander Hamilton’s Hidden Life, will be published by Harvard University Press.

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