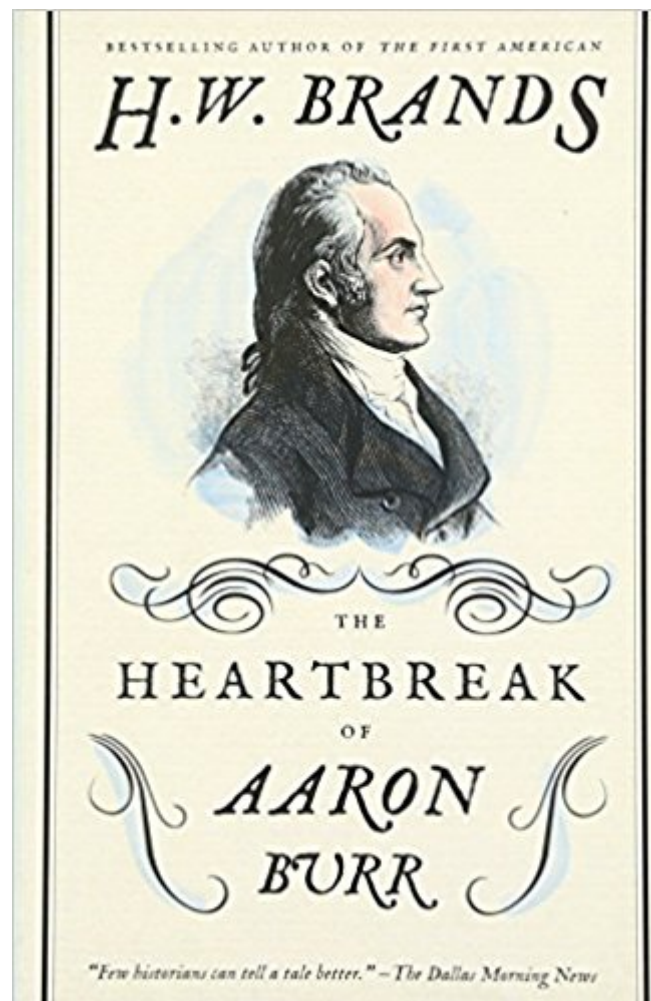




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# The Heartbreak Of Aaron Burr (American Portraits)



## Synopsis

Though he was a hero of the Revolutionary War, a prominent New York politician, and vice president of the United States, Aaron Burr is today best remembered as the villain who killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. But as H. W. Brands demonstrates in this fascinating portrait of one of the most compelling politicians in American history, Burr was also a man before his time—a proponent of equality between the sexes well over a century before women were able to vote in the US. Through Burr's extensive, witty correspondence with his daughter Theodosia, Brands traces the arc of a scandalous political career and the early years of American politics. The Heartbreak of Aaron Burr not only dramatizes through their words his eventful life, it also tells a touching story of a father's love for his exceptional daughter, which endured through public shame, bankruptcy, and exile, and outlasted even Theodosia's tragic disappearance at sea. A Paperback Original

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"H. W. Brands brings to life Burr's forgotten contributions as a Revolutionary War hero and politician, as well as the shame that shadowed him for the rest of his life after Hamilton's death." —The New York Times "Intense. . . . Short, accessible . . . tightly focused work. . . . In The Heartbreak of Aaron Burr, Mr. Brands goes beyond what is commonly known about Burr to show his more admirable side, which lay in his developing the mind and character of the

treasure of his life, his daughter Theodosia." *The Washington Times* "Tightly crafted. . . . Aaron Burr is our Founding Father in the shadows. So often the gifted American who gut-shot Alexander Hamilton on a sheltered rocky ledge in Weehawken, N.J., is remembered as a nasty piece of work. . . . The flawed, fascinating pol has been the subject of many biographies. But in H.W. Brands's beguiling 192-pager, *The Heartbreak of Aaron Burr*, the grandson of Calvinist preacher Jonathan Edwards steps off the page with customary aplomb not as a cartoonish villain but as a cultured, considerate and caring father who was a Princeton graduate at 16, a hero of the Revolution at 20, New York state attorney general at 30 and U.S. senator at 35. . . . Like Herman Melville, who swept us back to 19th-century New Bedford's Spouter-Inn in *Moby-Dick*, Brands transports us to a room on Stone Street in New York on this eighth day of June, anno domini 1812. . . . And it's [Burr and Theo's] highly literate, lively correspondence that leavens this revealing book and makes its subjects spring to life. *Austin American-Statesman* "Although Burr is the subject of numerous biographies, Brands's use of the letters between Burr and Theo, named after her mother, allows a somewhat different perspective. As the title may suggest, this sketch seems to look more at Burr the man than the other categories in which he could be placed politician, duelist, accused traitor. While Brand concisely covers the breadth of Burr's life, it is clear that the father-daughter relationship was an extraordinary one. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* "Compelling. . . . A softer perspective of one of American history's most controversial figures. It's true Burr gets a bad rap. . . . The letters give us an authentic glimpse of his personality while nicely mirroring the dramatic political landscape (duels, deals and treason) of the time. *Austinist* "Brands reveals another side of Burr in this examination of his extensive correspondence with his beloved daughter, Theodosia. . . . The letters deal with more than personal relations, as Burr discourses upon subjects as varied as sexual equality and political rivalry. . . . This useful, often emotionally stirring work offers a surprising view of an enigmatic personality. *Booklist* "The second in the author's series entitled *American Portraits*, this is one of the increasingly popular small stories that give so much insight into the men, women and events of history. A short but thrilling page-turner. Brands burrows into Burr's psyche and exposes his failings as he details the outstanding talents that were so sadly wasted. *Kirkus Reviews*

H. W. BRANDS holds the Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History at the University of Texas at Austin.

A New York Times bestselling author, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in biography for *The First American* and *Traitor to His Class*.

An interesting account of the life of Aaron Burr, told without bias or favoritism. This relatively short read (192 pages in paperback) covers most of Vice President Burr's adult life - though his part in the Revolution is alluded to rather than documented. The "Heartbreak", of course, refers to his relationship with his beloved daughter Theodosia and his grandson, Aaron Burr Alston. Professor Brands applies an interesting style to the writing of the book: short, succinct chapters drawn up in short, succinct sentences told in an assertive style - in the fashion of one who has actually witnessed history, rather than one who is recounting it from research. He blends the correspondence of Mr. Burr and Theodosia and other characters into the narrative without breaking the pace of the story. His writing is interesting and quite pleasant in its cadence. There is a "romantic" character about the telling of this story - which I think Professor Brands very much intends - though the story is not saccharine, or maudlin in the least. The author spends more time on Burr's trial for treason than other biographies have and it is appreciated. We hear from John Marshall, Luther Martin, Edmond Randolph and other now famous figures at the trial. However, apart from the detail of the trial, if you have read a Burr biography, you will not likely find new historic incidents here, nor do I think that was Professor Brands' intent - so much as to very deftly present the emotion of the events of Aaron Burr's life. And, he has done that very well. Consider reading as well, Professor Nancy Isenberg's book *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* for another book that takes an interestingly different look at Burr the man--rather than the villain.-----kindle edition-----This e-book shows no sign of the occasional quirks of this format (odd line-breaks, typographical errors, non-working links, etc). The compactness of the book extends to chapter names as well - the author simply numbers the 41 chapters, so the table of contents is less than informative. There are no notes or index - which can be a useful feature in e-book format, but again, I think this is in keeping with the style of the book. A personal opinion; the portraits of Hamilton and Jefferson presented mid-book are perhaps the least recognized of the portraits commonly seen. Other portraits included: Aaron Burr, Theodosia Burr, Andrew Jackson, James Wilkerson, and John Marshall. e-Book publication quality,

Jefferson  
Hamilton  
Burr  
Theodosia Burr  
Andrew Jackson  
James Wilkerson  
John Marshall

If you want a book about the famous duel between Hamilton and Burr, this is not the book for you. Instead this is a book that reveals much about the man who killed Hamilton, including his amazing

love for his daughter Theo. It's a short book, but like most of H.W. Brands books (i.e. Jackson, Grant, Texas), it's an informative and quick read. It spends much more time about Burr's post-duel conspiracy to form an empire in the Spanish territories and gives a portrayal of the man as a brilliant yet cool, emotionless opportunist, who has a knack for charming prospective financiers, political supporters and/or ladies in general. I recommend this book, particularly to lovers of H.W. Brands historical biographies.

The Heartbreak of Aaron Burr by H.W. Brands, published by Anchor Books in 2012. Aaron Burr is one of my favorite founding fathers. He is much misunderstood and falsely so (we need to get textbook writers who touch the surface to revise based on research and truth versus lazy snippets that are merely repeated). University of Texas Professor H. W. Brands is one of my all time favorite authors. When I read his biography of Ben Franklin, I literally could not put it down. I recall spending an entire Sunday in pajamas from sunup to bedtime literally in my bed reading that book. This is a short masterpiece. In true H.W. Brands style, it is a page turner. Aaron Burr's love for his daughter, grandson and country leap off the pages. What I would pay for H. W. Brands to write a 700 page comprehensive report of Burr's life. In this little American Portraits series you see inside the soul of Aaron Burr. You witness his genius, his political savvy and unparalleled love for his daughter. The final pages will have you in tears as you share Burr's heartbreak over what he loves most: his family. Brands quotes enough snippets of the Burr treason trial to convince even the history novice of the ridiculousness of such charges. Great book on a great man who should be the torch on how to be the world's best dad. The unjust sufferings he went through are simply gargantuanly unfair.

Brands is not "masterful" as one of the critics claim. Brands is, however, highly skilled at plagiarism. This book is primarily letters written by Burr and other individuals in the orbit of Burr's life. Brand's commentary on these letters is bland, trite and boorish - Brand did not write this book, Aaron Burr, Theodosia Prevost Burr, Theodosia Alston-Burr, and many others wrote this book. Brands merely cobbled together old letters and lent an incomplete narration to the letters. Save your money and buy other books regarding Aaron Burr.

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