

Press Release
For immediate release

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Aaron Burr Returns to New York: An Exhibition on Burr and His Contemporaries

A New Appraisal and Study of Aaron Burr, his Contemporaries and the Politics of the Early Republic

At the Grolier Club

May 15 – July 28, 2012

The 1970s Bicentennial Celebration of our nation's independence sparked a renewed interest by historians in the early American republic. Their research has focused a greater understanding of those politically explosive decades, which established the system that governs us today. One important result of this intense study by scholars and students of history has been a much-needed reevaluation of the life and career of Aaron Burr, third Vice President of the United States. Thus, a more authentic image of the real Burr has begun to emerge to replace that of the arch-villain, based upon popular prejudice fostered by political animosity that has darkened the pages of history books for too many years.

The Grolier Club is pleased to present a unique exhibition that explores the legacy of Aaron Burr. Opening to the public on May 15, *Aaron Burr Returns to New York: An Exhibition on Burr and His Contemporaries* marks the 200th anniversary of Burr's return to New York, ending a self-imposed exile to Europe following his trial for treason and tragic duel with Alexander Hamilton. This exhibit of rare items of "Burriana" ranks as the first comprehensive portrayal of the Vice President's life ever staged. Besides revealing the exciting story of his political disputes, it reminds us, too, of his less publicized, but highly significant, achievements as a daring soldier of the Revolution and of his brilliant rise as a lawyer and politician of the Early Republic.

Included in the exhibit are rare books, pamphlets, newspapers, manuscripts, documents, autograph letters, art and relics related to Burr and his contemporaries including Tapping Reeve, Benedict Arnold, Richard Montgomery, George Washington, Israel Putnam, Alexander Hamilton, Joseph Brandt, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Swartwout, Harman Blennerhassett, James Wilkinson, Lewis Wetzel, and many more.

Among the items to be displayed are previously unpublished autograph letters of Burr including the passing of revolutionary war intelligence from George Washington; the 1800 report of the first recorded murder trial in the United States; an 1804 share in the trust fund established for Hamilton following the most famous duel in U.S. history; an 1807 subpoena from Burr's Trial for Treason and Burr's watch with the only known portrait of his first wife and the earliest known portrait of his daughter Theodosia.

The exhibit also examines Burr's beliefs, considered progressive during his time, regarding women's rights, his support of the arts and the beginnings of the anti-slavery movement. At the dawn of the 21st century, whether Aaron Burr continues to shed his persona as one of the most misunderstood individuals in American history and assumes the more celebrated stature that he once enjoyed will remain for the patrons of this exhibit to decide.

LOCATION AND TIME: *Aaron Burr Returns to New York* will be on view at the Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York, from May 15 – July 28, 2012. The exhibit will be open to the public free of charge, Monday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Additional information and directions are available at www.grolierclub.org.

CATALOGUE: A fully-illustrated catalog of *Aaron Burr Returns to New York* will be available at the Grolier Club.

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS AT THE GROLIER CLUB

Sept. 11 –Nov. 17, 2012. *In Pursuit of a Vision: Two Centuries of Collecting Americana at the American Antiquarian Society.*

Dec. 4, 2012 – Feb. 2, 2013. *From Wunderkammer to Museum, 1599 - 1850*

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