



*"He is enterprising, quick
in his perception and his
judgment is intuitively great."*

— GEORGE WASHINGTON

Sugar mills dot Nevis' emerald slopes and Georgian buildings line its narrow streets, probably little different from when Hamilton was a boy. As I step past women carrying parasols to block the sun and glimpse monkeys darting between the palm trees, it does feel like I've traveled back in time.

In Charlestown, the island's tiny and colorful capital, gingerbread houses and winding roads supply the backdrop for the start of Hamilton's intriguing history. An eye-catching tree known as a flamboyant — the national flower of St. Kitts and Nevis — swoops over the stone walls of the Nevis Heritage Center (nevisheritage.org), its crimson blooms forming a pretty canopy over the entrance. A bronze plaque hangs on the wall, announcing that this is the site where Hamilton, the first U.S. treasury secretary and the man who established the U.S. Mint, was born in 1757.

This two-story Georgian overlooking the waterfront houses the Museum of Nevis History (explorenevis.com/the-museum-of-nevis-history) and the first floor boasts the restored remnants of Hamilton's birthplace as well as exhibits on the culture and history of Nevis. The Nevis House of Assembly, the

island's parliamentary body, meets on the second floor. The building dates to 1680 but was destroyed by an earthquake in 1840, and was restored — with the original exterior staircase — in 1983.

With the soundtrack from *Hamilton* playing in the background, I'm ushered into the humble showcase of the war hero's early life. The small museum features a painting of the house as it looked when he was born, a portrait and quotes from his contemporaries: "He is enterprising, quick in his perception and his judgment is intuitively great," said George Washington. The other half of the museum shows off historic artifacts of the island itself, including pottery and carnival costumes.

Across the courtyard, the Nevis Heritage Center displays the permanent exhibit, Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America, a version of which toured the U.S. a couple of years ago. The showcase lays out Hamilton's journey from a poor boy born out of wedlock (the "bastard, orphan, son of a whore" described by nemesis Aaron Burr in the musical) to a powerful statesman.

Just outside the center, the island's slave market was located next door to the Hamilton house. The location isn't marked, but older locals can tell you exactly where it is. It's widely believed, especially on Nevis, that Hamilton >