

Alexander Hamilton: A True American Hero

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## Alexander Hamilton: A True American Hero

A man of many talents that never stopped working for what he believed in, Alexander Hamilton played an important role in the formation of our country. His major accomplishments include being the first Secretary of Treasury, creating the national financial system, and creating the Federalist Party. Before he was Secretary of Treasury, Hamilton fought and was a leader in the Revolutionary War, and he helped in getting the country to accept the United States Constitution.

Alexander Hamilton was born on January 11, 1757 in Charlestown, Nevis, British West Indies. Hamilton grew up as an orphan because his Scottish father abandoned him and his mother died of an illness that Hamilton was able to survive.<sup>1</sup> Once his parents were out of his life, Hamilton was placed in the care of a cousin that soon committed suicide. After that, he moved in with a merchant family that he worked for as a clerk. During these years of boredom, Alexander started to write pieces that he would submit to his local newspaper. A hurricane swept through his town that destroyed everything, and Hamilton wrote about it. A group of well-off people in Hamilton's community got together and took up a collection to send him to America to get an education in 1772.<sup>2</sup>

Once he got to the mainland, Hamilton attended Elizabethtown Academy for a while until he tried to go to the College of New Jersey, but they wouldn't allow him to have an accelerated course of study, so he went and attended King's College. In 1774, when the people first started talking about revolution, Hamilton was among the colonists that were very vocal about the need for revolution. In 1775, he joined a company of artillerymen while he was still a student. While

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<sup>1</sup> Allison, Robert J. *The American Revolution: a Concise History*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Speer, Emory. "Alexander Hamilton." *The Yale Law Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1906, pp. 94–109.  
[www.jstor.org/stable/785473](http://www.jstor.org/stable/785473).

he was in that company, he got noticed for stealing British cannons.<sup>3</sup> Hamilton had been asked to be an aide to many historical figures that any man would have been lucky to write for, but Hamilton wanted fight in the war instead of taking an office job. Eventually though, George Washington requested that Hamilton be his aide, and Hamilton could not refuse that offer. He hoped that Washington would give him command of a company one day, so that he could rise to military glory.

During his time as Washington's aide, Hamilton mostly wrote letters to people high up in the government for Washington. Although he was entrusted with a variety of high level duties, Hamilton never lost sight of the fact that he wanted to be placed in command of a battalion. Towards the end of the war, after being rejected countless times by Washington, he finally told Washington that he would resign if he was not given command. Finally, Hamilton was given command of a New York light infantry battalion. He ended taking charge of three battalions during the Battle of Yorktown where he worked with the French to take down British forts which caused the British to have to surrender, essentially ending the war.<sup>4</sup>

Hamilton resigned his post as aide to George Washing once he got his military glory from the Battle of Yorktown. He joined the Congress of the Confederation, but he soon resigned after he became frustrated with the weakness of the central government under the Articles of Confederation. He went home to New York, practiced law, and started one of the longest running banks in American history, the Bank of New York. Hamilton then attended the Annapolis Convention as a delegate from New York in which he played a major role by writing the resolution for a constitutional convention that would rewrite the Articles of Confederation.

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<sup>3</sup> Rakove, Jack N. *Revolutionaries: a New History of the Invention of America*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Lancaster, Bruce et al. *The American Heritage History of The American Revolution*. New York, Bonanza Books, 1984.

Even though Hamilton played a critical role in getting the Constitutional Convention to happen, he did not play a huge role in the actual convention. He couldn't get most of his big government ideas through because the other two delegates from New York disagreed with him, so they would vote against him which made New York's vote go towards keeping the Articles of Confederation the same. Although he couldn't do much at the Constitutional Convention, he did everything he could to get the new United States Constitution ratified.<sup>5</sup> Hamilton asked John Jay and James Madison to help write a series of essays that would defend the Constitution and hopefully convince some states to ratify it. By and large, Hamilton wrote the most by writing fifty-one of the eighty-five essays that were all combined to be called *The Federalist Papers*.<sup>6</sup>

Hamilton gave his life to helping the country become an independent nation that would be able to run itself. He fought long and hard to be allowed to be a leader in a war in which he believed in, and he fought for his country to accept a constitution that would allow the government to keep them afloat. Alexander Hamilton was a huge force in the American Revolution and in the formation and passing of the United States Constitution.

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<sup>5</sup> Phillips, Kevin. *1775: a Good Year for Revolution*. New York, Viking, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Rakove, Jack N. *Revolutionaries: a New History of the Invention of America*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

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## Biography

My name is Ashlynn Turbett, and I am a senior at Sweeny High School. I am currently ranked first in the graduating class of 2017, and have held this position all throughout high school.

I have been an active member of the Sweeny Bulldog Band for the past seven years. I have held the leadership position of drum major for my junior and senior year. I was also elected by my peers to be my class' representative in band my freshman and sophomore years. I have earned a position in the All-Region and All-Area Bands for all four years of high school. I have earned three first divisions at the state level for participating in an ensemble. I was awarded Outstanding Musician for every year of high school for my grade level. I am currently ranked Master Musician. I am also a member of NHS and POWER SET. Acceptance into these organizations is merit-based. I am treasurer of both organizations.

Being involved in those school-sanctioned activities has inspired me to become active in my community. Some of the community service activities I have been involved in include: fence building at Sea Center Texas, Sweeny Thanksgiving Feast, Sweeny United, raising money for cancer research with NHS, tutoring and mentoring, participating in canned food drives, and working a blood drive. I have also spent a lot of time volunteering in the concession stands for my band.

In the future, I plan to attend the University of Texas at Austin. I intend on majoring in electrical engineering. I hope to obtain my master's degree before I head off into the work force. I'm very excited to begin my life at this institution and see what the future has in store for me.