



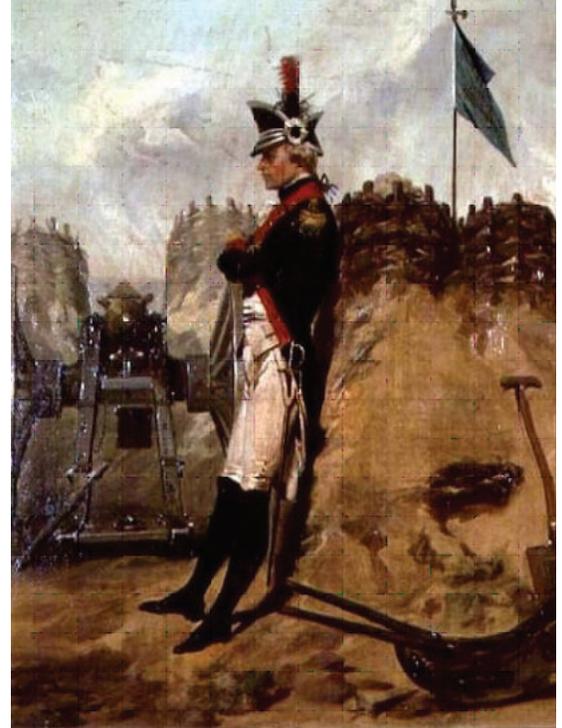
## An American Original

When we think of the founders of this great nation names such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin rush to mind. And why not, they were all very influential and respected men who help to mold thirteen independent colonies into one nation. One founder who has undeservingly been overlooked is Alexander Hamilton.

Serving as George Washington's aide and writing mach of the correspondence to the Continental Congress, Hamilton would be exposed to the inefficiencies of a weak and divided government.

As the first secretary of treasury, Hamilton would be very influential in the development of the young republic. Hamilton's economic policies laid the foundation upon which a once bankrupt nation would rise and become one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

Hamilton's interpretation of the Constitution helped to expand the powers of the federal government to carry out its constitutional responsibilities.



## Humble Beginnings

Alexander Hamilton was the only founder not born in what would become the United States, but rather on the Caribbean island of Nevis. Hamilton spent his formative years on the island where he lived with his father, James Hamilton, and mother, Rachel Lavien Hamilton. Hamilton's earlier childhood was plagued with several tragedies. His father would abandon his family by the time he was 10 and his mother would die by the time he was 13.

Left alone in the world with his older brother, Hamilton will find work as clerk with the trading company Beekman and Cruger. As a clerk the young Hamilton would be exposed to global commerce, trading commodities of various kinds in monies from several nations.

Alexander Hamilton's departure from the Caribbean was a result of several fortuitous events. In late August of 1772, a devastating hurricane ravaged



St. Croix and the surrounding islands. Hamilton's description of the storm was published in the local newspaper. The imagery and eloquence of the young Hamilton impressed several wealthy and influential islanders who then became his patrons. A special fund was organized to send Hamilton to be educated in North America. By 1774, Hamilton would be enrolled in King's College.

## Cultivating a Revolutionist

Upon arriving to New York City, Hamilton was immersed in talks over revolution. Groups such as the Sons of Liberty roamed the streets, while leading Tories taught the young Hamilton at King's College.

During this period, Hamilton emerged as one of the young voices refuting Parliamentary powers. Responding to Samuel Seabury's essay "A Westchester Farmer," accusation that the colonist are to blame for their misfortunes, Hamilton unleashed a furious defense for colonial rule. In "A Full Vindication," Hamilton espoused the colonist's belief that taxation can only be imposed by the colonist; the British were at fault for the Tea Parties, and non-importation was a desired method of protest. In a second essay, "The Farmer Refuted," Hamilton argued that the colonist allegiance was to the king and not Parliament, and called for unity between the colonies, as well as outlining a strategy for winning a war for independence.

Along with writing political pamphlets, Hamilton also joined a volunteer company called the Heart of



Oak. Training on the grounds of nearby Saint Paul's Chapel, Hamilton pursued his military training just as passionately and intensely as his academic courses. Making up for what he lacked in physical strength and adding to an already rigorous academic course load, Hamilton delved into military history.

Always preparing himself for greatness, Hamilton took full advantage of every opportunity that presented itself.

## The American Revoultion

Alexander Hamilton's quick rise in the hierarchy of New York affluent society and the military were a result of several close friendships he had established while attending King's College. Through the recommendation of Alexander McDougall—a leader of the New York's Sons of Liberty— John Jay commissioned Hamilton as artillery captain on March 14, 1776. From here on out Hamilton was a rising star in the military.

In January of 1777, Hamilton came under the patronage of the most prominent man in America. General Washington asked him to be his aide-de-camp. Hamilton and Washington developed an enduring relationship that would span more than 30 years.

Hamilton was promoted to the rank of colonel by



the time the Battle of Yorktown, which occurred in October of 1781. Here Hamilton would help lead the final charge against a surrounded British army, bringing major military engagement to end.

## After the War

After the Revolution, Hamilton became active in several areas. He became a lawyer and help to establish judicial review, founded the Bank of New York in 1783, and was one of the first members of the New York Manumission Society.

As the nation grew deeper and deeper in debt to its European creditors, and fearing the nation was on the verge of insolvency, Hamilton along with James Madison organized several meetings that would lead to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787.



## Publius

On September 17, 1787 the Constitution was sent out to the states for ratification. To ensure that New York, being a very divisive state, would ratify the Constitution Hamilton set out to convince his fellow New Yorkers of the benefits of the new government.

Aided by John Jay and James Madison, and writing anonymously calling themselves "Publius," the three men wrote 85 articles describing every facet of the new government.

Describing the benefits of a stronger central government, these articles would become known as the Federalist Papers.

## Secretary of the Treasury

As the first secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton helped to lay the foundation for a strong central government.

Through his financial plans, Hamilton help to bring the nation's credit rating on par with the powerful nations of Europe. Hamilton was also the driving force in the establishment of the Bank of the United

States, as wells as establishing the Revenue Cutter Service — the forerunner of the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Mint.

Among Hamilton's many accomplishments as treasury secretary, his most enduring achievement was the strengthening of the executive branch.

## The Grange

As he stepped away from national politics, Alexander Hamilton began to focus more on his growing family. In 1801 he commissioned John McCombs Jr. to design and construct a country home in the northern part of Manhattan—Harlem. Hamilton called the house the "Grange" after his grandfather's homestead in Scotland.



## The Duel

Sadly, the immigrant who became a Founding Father had only a few years to enjoy his new home. On July 11, 1804 Hamilton would be fatally wounded in a duel with the vice president, Aaron Burr. Stemming from years of professional and personal attacks by both parties, Aaron Burr took particular offense at Hamilton's use of the word "despicable" when describing vice president's character.

Alexander Hamilton has left a legacy that shows what hard work and perseverance can accomplish and like most of the founding fathers, he continues



to inspire future generations. Indeed, many recognize that we live in the America envisioned by him.