

ALEXANDER HAMILTON
Signer of the Constitution of the United States

(Excerpted from, *The Truth about the Founding Fathers of the American Republic*, copyright 2013 by Dr. Catherine Millard.)

1755	Born on January 11 th , in Nevis, British West Indies
1773-75	Attended King's College (Columbia), New York
1776-77	Captain in the Continental Army
1777-81	Aide-de-camp to General Washington
1782	Admitted to the bar
1782-83	Member of the Congress of Confederation
1786	Delegate to the Annapolis Convention
1786-88	Member of the New York legislature
1787	Delegate to the Constitutional Convention
1788	Member of the New York Ratification Convention
1789-95	Secretary of the United States Treasury
1798	Appointed Major General, U.S. Army
1804	Died on July 12 th

Frequently asked questions about Alexander Hamilton:

1. Was Alexander Hamilton a product of the atheistic “Enlightenment?”

Alexander Hamilton arrived in New York in 1772 at age 16 from the British West Indies. His education was sponsored by **William Livingston**, Signer of the Constitution. He studied at Grammar School in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, entering King's College at age 17, from which he graduated with honors. On April 13th, 1787, by Act of the Legislature of the State of New York, he was appointed a Trustee of King's College (Columbia), together with the **Right Rev. Samuel Provoost**, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, (who preached George Washington's Inaugural Sermon); **Rev. John H. Livingston; James Wilson, L.L.D.** (Signer of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution); five other Protestant pastors; and Gershom Seixas, Jewish Rabbi.⁸⁶

In “A Letter from the Governors of the College of New York (King's College), respecting the Collection that was made in this Kingdom in 1762 and 1763, for the Colleges of *Philadelphia* and *New York*,” we find that the origin and purpose for the establishment of *King's College* was a “*Seminary of Learning, for the Instruction of Youth in useful Knowledge, and the Principles of Virtue, Religion and Loyalty...*” as follows:

TO ALL
PATRONS
of
Learning and Knowledge,
and
Friends of the BRITISH EMPIRE
in AMERICA.

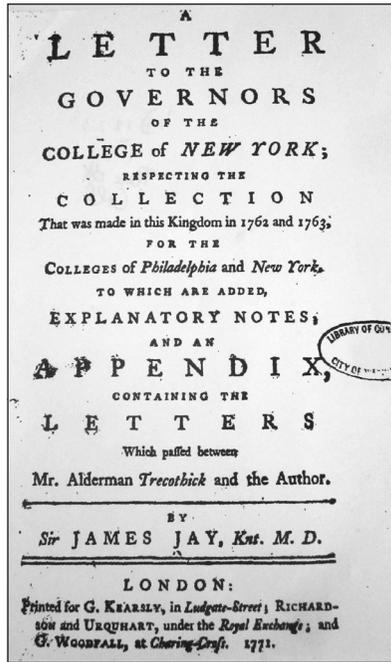
The GOVERNORS of the College of the Province of *New York*,
in the City of *New York*, in AMERICA, send Greeting.

In this remote and uncultivated part of the world, where ignorance too generally prevails, the erecting a *public Seminary of Learning, for the Instruction of Youth in useful Knowledge, and the Principles of Virtue, Religion and Loyalty, is an Object of such real Importance*, that we are persuaded an attempt to accomplish it will meet with the approbation of every friend to the prosperity of the British Empire in America.

To attain an advantage so inestimable in itself, and so essential to the honour and well-being of our Country; we endeavoured to found an Academy in this City, and favoured with a Royal Charter, the design, by the countenance of the Government, and the liberality of individuals, was carried on with vigour and Spirit, and afforded us the most pleasing prospect of success. But the ravages of a destructive war, which laid waste so great a part of our Country, increased our expenses, dispirited many of our friends, and prevented us from receiving such further support from them or the Legislature, as we had reason to expect: Thus our slender fund is almost exhausted, and, what adds to our misfortune, the public debts, and circumstances of the Colony, forbid us to entertain the most distant hopes of future assistance from them.

Unable of ourselves to accomplish this useful purpose, we have no recourse but to the munificence of our Mother Country, whose bountiful hand hath ever been liberally extended, to protect and advance the happiness of her Colonies. We do therefore, by those presents, authorize and appoint James Jay, M.D. a gentleman of this City, of a liberal education, and of eminence in his profession, the Hon. George Clark, Esq; Secretary, and Robert Charles, Esq; Agent, of this Province, and Barlow Trecothick and Moses Franks, Merchants of London, and each of them by himself, our substitutes, for us and on our behalf, to solicit and receive the donations and *contributions, of all such as shall be generously disposed to favour the Advancement of Learning and Virtue in this extensive and uncultivated part of the world.*

In testimony whereof, we have caused our Common Seal to be hereunto affixed, this fourteenth day of May, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Two.⁸⁷



Title page of “A Letter to the Governors of the College of New York,” 1771.
 Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection.

King’s College, in the City of New York, was originally founded by Royal Charter, in the year 1754. The *Trustees of King’s College*, as appointed by Royal Charter, A.D. 1754, were:

- The Most Rev. Father in God, Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury,
 - The Right Honourable Dunk, Earl of Halifax, President of the Board of Trade and Plantations,
 - The Governor of the Province,
 - The Judges of the Supreme Court,
 - The Secretary of the Province,
 - The Attorney General for the Province,
 - The President of His Majesty’s Council.
 - The Speaker of the House of Assembly,
 - The Treasurer of the Province.
 - The Mayor of the City of New York,
 - The Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church,
 - The Senior Pastor of the Dutch Church,
 - The Pastor of the Lutheran Church,
 - The Pastor of the French Protestant Church,
 - The Pastor of the Presbyterian Church...
- and twenty-four citizens.⁸⁸

From the above we understand that King's College was founded to train youth in "useful knowledge, and the Principles of Virtue, Religion and Loyalty," its first Board of Trustees being headed by the *Archbishop of Canterbury, with Rectors of five Protestant denominations in New York – Episcopalian, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, French Protestant and Presbyterian* – thereby precluding atheism. In 1787 the name of King's College was altered to *Columbia College*.⁸⁹

2. How did Alexander Hamilton die?

Alexander Hamilton did much to secure Thomas Jefferson's election as third United States President. This intensified the animosity already felt for him by Aaron Burr, whom he had frequently and effectually opposed; and Burr, on a trivial pretext, beguiled him into a duel (July 11th, 1804) at Weehawken, New Jersey, opposite New York – mortally wounding him at the first fire. Hamilton, who abhorred the prevalent code, but felt forced to fight in order to preserve his influence, previously had determined to discharge his pistol into the air. He died on the following day, July 12th, 1804.⁹⁰

3. Was Alexander Hamilton a Christian?

In a *Eulogy on General Alexander Hamilton*, pronounced at the request of the Citizens of Boston, July 26th, 1804 by **Honorable Harrison G. Otis, Esq.**, we read of Alexander Hamilton's true Christianity:

...But while Religion mourns for this aberration of the judgment of a great man, she derives some consolation from his testimony in her favour. If she rejects the apology, she admits the repentance; and if the good example be not an atonement, it may be an antidote for the bad. Let us then, in an age of infidelity, join, in the imagination, the desolate group of wise, and children and friends, who surround the dying bed of the inquisitive, the luminous, the scientific Hamilton, and *witness his attention to the Truth and comforts of our Holy Religion*. Let us behold the *lofty warrior bow his head before the Cross of the meek and lowly JESUS*; and he who had so lately graced the sumptuous tables and society of the luxurious and rich, now, regardless of these meaner pleasures, and aspiring to be admitted to a sublime enjoyment with which no worldly joys can compare – to a devout and humble participation of the bread of life. *The religious fervor of his last moments was not an impulse of decaying nature yielding to its fears, but the result of a firm conviction of the truths of the Gospel. I am well informed, that in early life, the evidences of the Christian Religion had attracted his serious examination, and obtained his deliberate assent to the Truth, and that he daily upon his knees devoted a portion of time to a compliance with one of its most important injunctions*: And that however these edifying propensities might have yielded occasionally to the business and temptations of life, they always resumed their influence, and would probably have prompted him to a public profession of *his faith in his Redeemer...*

4. What were Alexander Hamilton's greatest accomplishments?

In the same *Eulogy on General Alexander Hamilton*, pronounced by Hon. Harrison G. Otis, Esq., July 26, 1804, we learn of Hamilton's outstanding achievements:

“...**Must we then realize that HAMILTON is no more!** Must the sod, not yet cemented on the tomb of WASHINGTON, still moist with our tears, be so soon disturbed to admit the beloved companion of Washington, the partner of his dangers, the object of his confidence, the disciple who leaned upon his bosom! Insatiable death! Will not the heroes and statesmen, whom mad ambition has sent from the crimsoned fields of Europe, suffice to people thy dreary dominions! Thy dismal avenues have been thronged with princely martyrs and illustrious victims. Crowns and scepters, the spoils of royalty, are among thy recent trophies, and the blood of innocence and valour has flowed in torrents at thy inexorable command. Such has been thy ravages in the old world. And in our infant country how small was the remnant of our revolutionary heroes which had been spared from thy fatal grasp! Could not our WARREN, our MONTGOMERY, our MERCER, our GREENE, our WASHINGTON appease thy vengeance for a few short years! Shall none of our early patriots be permitted to behold the perfection of their own work in the stability of our Government and the maturity of our institutions!...

O HAMILTON! great would be the relief of my mind, were I permitted to exchange the arduous duty of attempting to portray the varied excellence of thy character, for the privilege of venting the deep and unavailing sorrow which swells my bosom, at *the remembrance of the gentleness of thy nature, of thy splendid talents and placid virtues!*

At the age of 18, while cultivating his mind at *King's College* (Columbia), he was raised from the leisure and delights of scientific groves by the din of war! He entered the American army as an officer of artillery, and at that early period familiarized himself to wield both his sword and his pen in the service of his Country. He developed at once the qualities which command precedence, and the modesty which conceals its pretensions. Frank, affable, intelligent and brave, HAMILTON became the favorite of his fellow soldiers. His intuitive perception and correct judgment rendered him a rapid proficient in military science, and his merit silenced the envy which it excited.

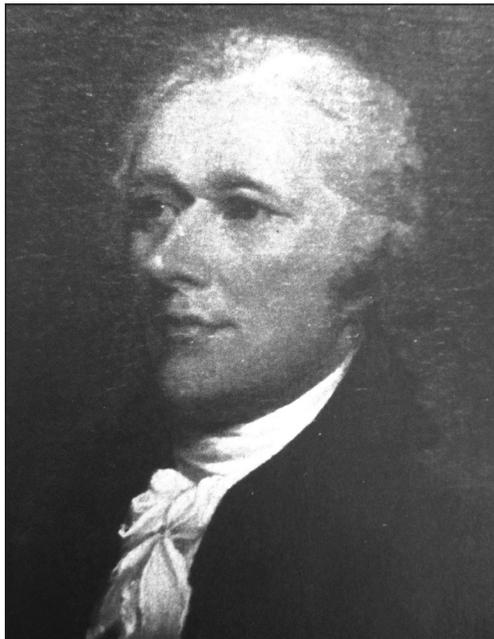
A most honourable distinction now awaited him. *He attracted the attention of the Commander-in-Chief*, who appointed him an Aide, and honored him with his confidence and friendship. This domestic relation afforded to both frequent means of comparing their opinions upon the policy and destinies of our Country, upon the sources of its future prosperity and grandeur, upon the imperfection of its existing establishments; and to digest those principles, which in happier times might be interwoven into a more perfect model of government.

Hence probably originated that filial veneration for **WASHINGTON** and

adherence to his maxims, which were ever conspicuous in the deportment of **HAMILTON**; and hence the exalted esteem and predilection uniformly displayed by the magnanimous patron of the faithful and affectionate pupil.

While the disasters of the American army, and the perseverance of the British ministry, presented the gloomy prospect of protracted warfare, young **HAMILTON** appeared to be content in his station, and with the opportunities which he had of fighting by the side, and executing the orders, of his beloved Chief. But the investment of the army of **CORNWALLIS** suddenly changed the aspect of affairs, and rendered it probable that this campaign, if successful, would be the most brilliant and decisive of any that was likely to occur. It now appeared that his heart had long panted for an occasion to signalize his intrepidity and devotion to the service of his Country. He obtained, by earnest entreaties, the command of a detachment destined to *storm the works of YORKTOWN*. *It is well known with what undaunted courage he pressed on to the assault with unloaded arms, presented his bosom to the dangers of the bayonet, carried the fort, and thus eminently contributed to decide the fate of the battle and of his Country.*

But even here the impetuosity of the youthful conqueror was restrained by the clemency of the benevolent man. – The butchery of the American garrison at New-London would have justified, and seemed to demand an exercise of the rigours of retaliation. This was strongly intimated to Colonel **HAMILTON**, but we find in his report to his commanding officer, in his own words, that, “*incapable of imitating examples of barbarity, and forgetting recent provocations, I spared every man who ceased to resist...*”



Alexander Hamilton – portrait of the founding father, by John Trumbull. The White House Collection.

To the **Second Convention which framed the Constitution**, he was also deputed as a delegate from the State of New York.

In the assemblage of the brightest jewels of America, the genius of HAMILTON sparkled with pre-eminent lustre. *The best of our orators were improved by the example of his eloquence.* The most experienced of our statesmen were instructed by the solidity of his sentiment, and all were convinced of the utility and *extent of his agency in framing the Constitution.*

When the instrument was presented to the people for their ratification, the obstacles incident to every attempt to combine the interests, views and opinions of the various States, threatened in some of them to frustrate the hopes and exertions of his friends. The fears of the timid; the jealousies of the ignorant; threats of the designing; and the sincere conviction of the superficial, were arrayed into a formidable alliance, in opposition to the system. *But the pen of HAMILTON dissolved this league...*

When the Constitution was adopted, and WASHINGTON was called to the Presidency by his grateful Country, our departed friend was appointed to *the charge of the Treasury Department*, and of consequence became a confidential member of the administration...⁷⁹¹

So we see the extraordinary accomplishments of Alexander Hamilton, Aide-de-Camp to General Washington in the Revolutionary War, statesman, orator, hero and framer of the Constitution of the United States.



Tomb of Alexander Hamilton, Trinity Episcopal Church Burial Ground, New York City, New York.