George Washington: The Crucial Role In The History Of The USA

“Since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven, can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained: And since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” This quote is an excerpt from Washington’s First Inaugural Address on April 30, 1789. In the address, Washington told the people of the new country that he is going to make sure that they have their natural rights and a republican model of government. A republican government is where the powers of sovereignty are entrusted in the people and are exercised by the people. Geroge Washington shaped our government to be what it is today. In people's opinions, he is one of, if not the most, important president of the United States. What did he do to get this earnest reputation? This paper will uncover most of the first president's life and accomplishments.

Not a lot is known about Washington’s early life. George Washington was born on February 22, 1732 in Westmoreland Country, Virginia to Augistine and Mary Washington. He had five blood related siblings and four half-siblings. George’s dad died when he was only 11 and he inherited property in Fredericksburg. “George was required to take on the responsibility of running the family farm after his father's death. This responsibility was thrust upon George largely by the will of his mother” (1). Since he was so young, his mother helped him until he was old enough. Washington was scorned for his lack of education by the other Founding Fathers. He did not have the formal education that his elder brothers acquired, but he did learn surveying, mathematics, and trigonometry. His mom would not let him get a formal education because she wanted him to take care of the land. Later in life, Washington’s writings revealed that he was upset about his lack of education but his experience in the army helped him develop his confidence. “These experiences fostered leadership skills that offset his lack of a classical education, enabling him to interact successfully with men of greater education and worldly experience” (2).

George Washington’s step-brother, Lawrence, made military his new passion. He would watch Lawrence train with Navy with excitement.Washington studied fencing and military science with the help of his brother. Washington's official career in the military began in 1752 when Governor Dinwiddie appointed him as a district adjutant of the militia with the rank of major. The governor acknowledged that George Washington was successful, loyal, and brave. Around this time, the English and French were both adamant about gaining the Mississippi River Valley. The governor sent Major Washington with a letter to the French commander in an attempt to avoid military conflict. After his success, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on March 15, 1754. Washington was now in charge of over one hundred soldiers and was sent back to keep the French out of their colonies. Washington fought for four years against the French and the Indians. He was promoted once more and captured Fort Duquesne. Washington grew to dislike the actions of officers during his years of service in militia. He didn’t like their arrogant attitudes and ignorant thinking. Washington resigned his militia commission at the end of the war and came back to Mount Vernon. Over the next few years, Washington started opposing laws like the 1765 Stamp Act. He even organized a boycott because of the Townshend Acts. “With the

introduction of the Intolerable Acts following the 1774 Boston Tea Party, Washington commented that the legislation was an invasion of our rights and privileges” (3). To come up with a plan for these problems, the colonies decided to hold the First Continental Congress. Washington was elected as a delegate for Virginia. With the Battles of Lexington and Concord taking place in 1775, the American Revolution was starting to take place. In the Second Continental Congress meetings, the delegates were planning for the Revolutionary War. They agreed to create the Contineal Army. The delegates appointed Washington as the supreme commander. George Washington’s many qualities made him a great general and commander-in-chief. Washington was a great planner, he took care of the specifics, and made his soldiers discipline him. He was also ready to support his army by standing at the front lines. The first task he had was to go to Cambridge, Massachusetts where he found a disorganized army with little to no supplies. He worked to organize the men and to improve the fort in Boston. Recognizing that the next objective would likely be New York, in 1776 Washington moved south. Washington was flanked and forced from the city at Long Island. After the loss, to raise spirits, Washington conducted a risky attack on Trenton on Christmas night. His gambit paid off because he succeeded and started reconstructing the army. After he finished building the army up, he lost the Battle of Brandywine and ended up in a draw at the Battle of Monmouth. The commander was slowly moving to victory and this proved correct. “Joined by French forces in 1781, Washington moved south and besieged Lieutenant General Lord Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown. Receiving surrender on October 19, the battle effectively ended the war” (3). The document that confirmed the wars end was the Treaty of Paris. The treaty was signed on September 3, 1783 and stated that Great Britain has to recognize the Thirteen Colonies to be sovereign, free, and independent states. Another important document Geroge Washington was a part of is the Constitution.

Washington was interested not only in military matters, but also in government issues. As the newly independent colonies began making progress toward becoming a self-governing nation, the Continental Congress organized a Continental Convention to meet in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in order to draft a permanent constitution to replace the Articles of Confederation. (1). When Washington was chosen as a delegate to the Convention by the Virginia legislature, he declined. Only several prominent individuals ' constant pressure convinced him that his presence was essential. At the Convention, Washington was expected to be elected as the convention president and he was. During the debates, Washington was usually really quiet. While federalists were inclined to use the image of Washington as assistance for ratification of the Constitution, the public wanted to know what he thought of the Philadelphia proceedings. True to himself, he didn’t say a lot. Furthermore, once the final draft of the new Constitution was completed, many of the votes cast for it were due to Washington's lobbying on behalf of the governing document. Finally, the new Constitution was ratified not only by the majority of the members of the Constitutional Convention, but also all thirteen States supported it. There is no question that the crucial role of George Washington in the Constitutional Convention resulted in his unanimous election as the first president of the newly formed United States of America.