

Maryland Society Sons of the American Revolution

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A Divine Convention

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“The Constitution is the guide which I will never abandon.”(Fulk). These are the words of one of the most famous and illustrious American patriots in the short history of the United States of America. George Washington, a president, husband, politician, general, and true American hero said these words. He was one of the fifty-five members of the legendary Constitutional Convention of 1787. On May 25, 1787 fifty-five state representatives convened in Philadelphia in a small red brick house (Bailey). Not many people knew about the convention being held, and not a soul knew that these men were overthrowing the United States Government. This convention was certainly not a malicious or power hungry act, but rather the most impressive and unbelievable act in American history. Many amazing events, people, philosophies, and ideals have shaped the great country that we live in, but the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the single greatest gathering of men in American history, was the most important, and produced the Constitution that we still abide by today.

Following the American victory at Yorktown, the independent United States was a country in turmoil. Extraordinary men were present in the country, but a power struggle was ever present and a rulebook in which to follow was absent. If a step towards unity and order was not taken, the country could be in a corrupt and disorganized mindset. Anarchy was lingering on America’s doorstep. In 1777, the Articles of Confederation were written (Bailey). The Articles were America’s first Constitution. They had some strength, but far greater weaknesses. The Articles did not lay down effective laws. They were extremely hard to amend, and controlling commerce was a huge issue. In 1786, the state of Virginia called for a convention in Annapolis, Maryland to amend the Articles of Confederation. The convention was a complete failure, but one man, Alexander Hamilton, knew that the Articles must be revised. He proposed that the date of the convention be changed, and that it should take place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Bennet). He wanted to change and reconstruct the Articles. The Articles of Confederation now had one more chance to be revised.

The Convention that was to take place in Philadelphia was virtually unknown to the greater population of America. Furthermore, permission from Congress to revise the Articles of Confederation was lacking. Representatives from twelve of thirteen states, Rhode Island being the exception, attended the Convention (Bailey). On May 25 1787, the process finally began (Lloyd). The delegates had one simple task- to revise the

Articles. Instead, the Articles were expunged and a new Constitution began to be framed. Therefore, fifty-five well to do, prominent merchants, lawyers, and politicians overthrew the American government. A new Constitution was in the making. George Washington, the hero of the American Revolution, was elected chairman of the Convention (Howard). A leader was finally elected to keep the government in order, a small foreshadow of the future. Benjamin Franklin was present at the Convention. James Madison, known as the "Father of the Constitution," recorded the entire process (Agel). Alexander Hamilton was another prominent man present in Philadelphia. Although Thomas Jefferson was negotiating terms in France at the time of the Convention, he described this unbelievable gathering of men as a "Convention of Demigods." (Bailey). This was the event that was taking place in Philadelphia the summer of 1787.

After three months of organizing the United States Constitution, the fifty-five "demigods" created an utter masterpiece- simple perfection. The Constitution that the men formed was a document containing the Bill of Rights and the laws in which our country was to follow. America now had a strict government of laws and direction thanks to the Constitutional Convention.

The Constitutional Convention of 1787 was an event that assembled several of the greatest minds that the world has ever seen. It was truly a Convention of Demigods. We can now look at this event over two hundred and twenty years later and observe the outcome of this incredible occasion. The Constitutional Convention quite possibly saved the United States of America. Law and order was established in the new born infant country. The old philosophy that after the American Revolution was won, everything in America was perfect is completely false and mis-leading. After America gained independence, the young country was not able to nurture off of its mother country- Britain. America was left alone with no order and anarchy on the verge. The Constitutional Convention established law and a leader in the United States of America.

America is the most powerful country in the world, and also one of the largest. Four hundred years ago, America began as a mere colony in Jamestown, Virginia. The country began to grow out of its British shell and eventually snapped into a new, thriving independent country. Many people and events were responsible for this growth. But, the event that saved our country and shaped our government was the Constitutional Convention in 1787. No group of men in history can even compare to the fifty-five men at the convention. These divine men from thirteen distinct states rose together out of discord, resolved their many differences, and formulated the Constitution of America, the document that is the foundation for the greatest country the world has ever seen.

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Biography

Matthew Carey is a junior at Worcester Preparatory School and plays many sports including club soccer, and maintains a solid A average in all of his classes. He is the assistant editor and chief of his school newspaper. Included in his volunteer activities is work with the American Red Cross, the Sussex Pregnancy Care Center and church activities.