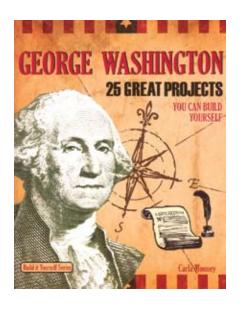
## George Washington: 25 Great Projects You Can **Build Yourself**

By Carla Mooney Illustrated by Samuel Carbaugh Nomad Press, White River Junction, VT 2010. 121 pages, paperback, \$15.95.

**Book Review by Steven S. Lapham** 



his book is actually a children's biography of the father of our country, with craft projects suggested throughout. It opens with a timeline and a simple map of North America ca. 1700. The main text is carefully written, at a reading level appropriate for students in grades 4-7. At the back are a glossary, list of resources for further study, and index. Each chapter includes helpful sidebars that highlight vocabulary words, short quotes, bio-sketches of Washington's contemporaries, and short discussions of interesting topics, such as the story of young George and the cherry tree (it's a myth); "the upside of Valley Forge" (the elaborate drills and colorful personality of Baron Freidrich Wilhelm von Steuben that kept the Revolutionary troops distracted from their material misery); and "What if the Constitution freed the slaves?" (It was "a missed opportunity" to prevent a civil war.) Samuel Carbaugh's simple black-and-white drawings unify the look of the pages and avoid the anachronisms or cartoon goofiness that mar some juvenile books about the founders. Ironically, a bit more detail in the sketches showing how to do the crafts would have been helpful. Upper elementary or middle level students who read the book themselves will learn a good deal of history,

**Constitutional Beginnings** when Daniel Shays, a former soldier, led 2,000 bankrupt Before the Constitution was created, the 13 colonies worked together under the Articles of Confederation. The Articles created an **alliance**, not a central government. Under the Articles see and the land on a central government. Under the Articles see and safe to be desired in the control government. The control government is not one control government. Instead, there was only a committee with representatives from each state. It is committee was Congress. down, but people recognized the state's inability to stop it from Congress was responsible for **foreign affairs**. It could declare war and naintain an army and navy. But this power was empty because the Articles did not allow Congress ASAGE happening again. to tax the states or enforce laws. 'Many of the members cast their eyes toward This weakness showed during General Washington as President; and shaped the war, when Congress could constitution: a document containing the basic laws and beliefs of a country. approve an army but could not aise money to pay for it. their Ideas of the powers to be given to a President by their Opinion of his Virtue In March 1786, John Jay, a member of the Continental Congress from New York, wrote to George. He said that some men alliance: a group that works together for a common goal. —South Carolina delegate PIERCE BUTLER executive: the branch of in response to Shay's Rebellion, the states called for a convention in Philadelphia. George did not wi in Congress wanted to revise the Articles of Confederation, In judicial: the branch of theory, George agreed. He knew the Articles would not hold the The delegates unanimously elected George to be president of the convention. Determined to write a new constitution instead of amending the Articles would not hold the 13 colonies together much longer. However, George believed the people would resist a strong central government until a crisis changed their minds. This battle, the Articles of Confederation, they debated the best way to set the new nation's government. government needed to be effec er, was not his. In George's also needed safegua ming oppressive. 0 

such as some of the complexities of Washington's eight-year presidency in a chapter of 14 pages. They can also try making a quill pen and writing with it—while using washable ink, please. Teachers in grades 1-3 may want to select just one or two of the simpler crafts as classroom activities (like a making a weather vane or a sewing-needle compass) to enhance an introductory lesson about George Washington. But teachers would be wise to avoid some of the more ambitious projects, such as

"creating your own sculpture of George" with a paste made of cornstarch and baking soda. Folding a model of the Washington Monument has a better chance of success. In short, this book is a welcome addition to the Build It Yourself Series, which currently has 28 titles. In this age of high-tech gadgets, it's still a lot of fun to poke holes in an orange with a toothpick and punctuate it with cloves to create a pomander, or to watch a needle, floating on a cork, ease around to the North.