Washington’s 1799 Will and Testament Concerning National Education

That as it has always been a source of serious regret with me, to see the youth of these United States sent to foreign Countries for the purpose of Education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own; contracting, too frequently, not only habits of dissipation & extravagence, but principles unfriendly to Republican Govermnmt and to the true & genuine liberties of Mankind… For these reasons, it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised on a liberal scale, which would have a tendency to sprd systemactic ideas through all parts of this rising Empire, thereby to do away local attachments and State prejudices…from our National Councils. Looking anxiously forward to the accomplishment of so desirable an object… the establishment of a UNIVERSITY in a central part of the United States, to which the youth of fortune and talents from all parts thereof might be sent for the completion of their Education in all the branches of polite literature; in arts and Sciences, in acquiring knowledge in the principles of Politics & good Government…

Item I give and bequeath in perpetuity the fifty shares which I hold in the Potomac Company (under the aforesaid Acts of the Legislature of Virginia) towards the endowment of a UNIVERSITY to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia, under the auspices of the General Government, if that government should incline to extend a fostering hand towards it…


VOCABULARY

imbibed: learned
contracting: getting
dissipation: thoughtless spending

perpetuity: to go on forever
auspices: endorsements
1. What type of primary source is this? __________________________________________________

2. Who created it? ____________________________ When was it created? ___________________

3a. What did the author of this document regret? ____________________________________________

3b. What reasons does the author give to support your answer in 3a? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

4. The word liberal on line 7 has multiple meanings. What is the meaning of the word in the context of this document?
   a. free  b. progressive  c. big  d. tolerant

5. Circle the three best words or phrases in lines 1-9 that help you to understand them meaning of the phrase rising Empire on line 8.

6. What does the author of this document want to create? ________________________________
   Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.
____________________________________________________________________________________

7. What is specifically mentioned in his will, in lines 14-18, that would allow this to happen?
____________________________________________________________________________________

8. Moving forward, George Washington was thinking about the future of our country as the United States, not as thirteen individual states. How would the creation of a national university and sending our future leaders there for an education be beneficial to our country? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.
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