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Power of the Past

Elements of history are present all throughout the world reminding us of the successes and mistakes of our past. Boston is a particularly historic city, with statues of major historical figures lining Commonwealth Avenue Mall. I took photos of an equestrian sculpture of George Washington and the stone sculpture of Alexander Hamilton. It can easily be said that both of these men had copious amounts of influence and power over America as they were both founding fathers, Washington being the first president of the United States and Hamilton as his secretary of the treasury, founding the modern banking system. The photos' composition can be interpreted as emphasizing the figure's power, as the photos are taken from a lower angle pointing upwards, making the men appear taller and therefore more authoritative, hence they appear to be looming over us making use of their power. Moreover, the lighting in these photos can connect to the impact and personal stories of Washington and Hamilton. The bright sunlight piercing through the clouds shines a spotlight on Washington, a heroic, almost mythological figure; everyone who grew up in America knows his name. Meanwhile, Hamilton, a lesser-known figure, is portrayed in the shadows as his accomplishments are dominated by other presidents and political figures of the time period. Despite this, the sun can be seen in the corner of the photo, hinting towards Hamilton's publicity and power that was soon to come. With Lin Manuel Miranda's Hamilton musical release, Alexander Hamilton rose to popularity, with people perhaps knowing even more facts about Hamilton now than they do about Washington. These founding fathers' statues display the power that these men had over society and the influence that the history they created still has on our country today.