Thesis:
The aim of this project is to know more about a mighty king who had his brilliant influences on our today's society. Cyrus the great, the founder of Persian Empire was one of the few kings in history who deserves to be called Great. Cyrus was the first ruler who spread the real democracy throughout his empire. His teachings are still practiced in modern democratic countries. Our history is filled with many great kings, who made their own impacts and contributions, and some are being forgotten for some reasons and Cyrus the Great is one of them. This is all about this project to know about Cyrus’s character and his contributions in history.

Core Concepts/Keywords:
Cyrus, History, Persia, Contributions, Democracy, Conqueror, Empire

Primary Source:

Citation:

Annotation:
Cyropaedia is written by Xenophon, a soldier in the ancient Greek army. In general it is a poetry type political romance describing Cyrus the Great as an ideal ruler for a nation and a person who is admired by everyone. It is unique in a way that a Greek soldier and historian writes about a Persian king and admires him in his writings. Basically, Cyropaedia investigates the life of Cyrus the Great. Besides that, many believe that Cyropaedia is also a tact on good kingship addressed to Greek soldiers and commanders. Cyrus’s achievements were not easily achievable by everyone, and this is recalled in the last chapter of this book. The book describes and narrated the events happened during Cyrus’s kingship in a novel format.

Throughout the history, many different versions of Cyropaedia has been released, some historians claim that Cyropaedia is not a reliable historical source and it is more like a fiction than a history account, but surely is the oldest historical source that could be found on the life and character of Cyrus the Great.

Print Reference Source:

Citation:

Annotation:
A multi-volume encyclopedia with alphabetically arranged topics relating to ancient civilizations which also provides their maps at different periods. The Persian empire during the reign of Cyrus became the world’s largest empire which is shown in a map of this volume. After more than 3000 years, the world did not have any empire larger than the Persian Empire during Cyrus’s reign and this title remained for Persians until today.

Electronic Reference Source:

Citation:

Annotation:
In this article Cyrus is described as a ruler who was called "The father" by his nation. This nation included many races and ethnics with people of different languages. Cyrus united all under one rule. Cyrus’s name
is even mentioned in the book of Bible(Jewish. Cyrus freed Jewish people form the Babylonian captivity and allowed them to return to their homeland. In Bible he is referred as a savior and a king who brought the freedom back to Jewish people. After every conquest, he let the people to continue following their own religion and traditions, he transmitted many cultures and traditions throughout his vast empire. In fact in history, he is one of the few conquerors, who are called as the “Great” by all the people.

Web Sites:

Citation:
History World Cyrus Legacy. 15 March. 2007. History World. 22 March. 2008
<http://history-world.org/cyrusIII.htm>

Annotation:
History World describes Cyrus the Great as one of the greatest kings ever existed on planet. A person who was more than a founder of an empire. He had many great qualities to rule the biggest empire ever existed on earth, peacefully and with full justice. His personality and practices influenced Greeks and Alexander the Great and transmitted by the Romans, may be considered to influence our thinking even now.

Citation:

Annotation:
Cyrus was the founder of the Persian empire, the reliable accounts on his early lives are very few. The only reliable accounts historians mostly refer to is the Herodotus’s documents who was a Greek historian is called as the father of history. Despite of his Greek background, Herodotus regarded Cyrus as a just ruler. While Herodotus’ description may be a legend, it does give insight into the figures surrounding Cyrus the Great’s early life. Most of his writings on Cyrus is about his the dates of his kingship.

Books:

Citation:

Annotation:
The book is one of the best resources and detailed document for those who find to know about Cyrus the Great. It has 12 chapters, starting on emphasizing the reliability of information written by Herodotus and Xenophon on Cyrus until it comes to describe a brief history on Cyrus’s death. The book describes Cyrus as the wealthiest and most significant king the world has ever seen. Jacob Abbott writings in this book are influenced from the old documents of Herodotus and Xenophon’s stories on Cyrus. She brought these stories back to memories again.

Citation:

Annotation:
This book is one of the greatest sources to read about the history of Persian Empire and Achaemenid dynasty. It starts with the rise of Achaemenid dynasty from Cyrus the great and its fall after the invasion of Alexander. A large section of the book is concerned with the character of Cyrus the great as the founder of Persian Empire. Most of the written historic texts written about the vast civilized Persian empire are written by Greek historians from Greek perspectives that are biased with strong historic propaganda. Pierre Briant might be one of very few historians who thoroughly analyzed the glory of Persian empire, especially during Achaemenid dynasty without considering the previous Greek reviews. In order to do that, author provides recently discovered texts, archaeological, iconographic and numismatic evidence for the reader. It is a very dense book in a way that the text are pretty much scholar with 1196 pages of heavy text that include 65 pages of only bibliography.

Taking Cyrus section into account, this book is a great source to familiarize readers with the character and contributions of Cyrus as the founder of Persian empire and Achaemenid dynasty.
Annotation:
The book describes the childhood and middle years of Cyrus the great. It's a novel explaining the events that shaped the character of Cyrus the great. Cambyses, the father of Cyrus the great, insisted his son to learn about the traditions and customs of his great nation to prepare himself as their future leader. Cyrus travels throughout Persia with soldiers and learn about the military life. The author also mentions the love story of Cyrus the great which lead to a conflict with his mother. The book is an account of Cyrus’s life and how it differs from other historic books written about Cyrus the great. However, these stories may not be completely correct but they give a very brief overview about the life of Cyrus and his nation in ancient time.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles:

Annotation:
Herodotus is known as the father of history. A Greek historian who is mostly known for his writings on Persian and Greek empires. However, due to his Greek background, many of his historical accounts might be favored to Greek theologies. Some scholars call him the father of lies, as they believe whatever he has written was just to praise his Greek background and also at some points criticize other civilizations like Persian empire. Herodotus’s view on Cyrus is very unique. In his books he often praised Cyrus as a great ruler but this was not Herodotus’s main argument. In his books, he often tired to portray Cyrus as an ideal ruler who served certain functions as he was supposed to do. Comparing to other historic accounts, Herodotus more wrote on fluctuations of Cyrus’s kingship period than to admire his contributions. This article in JSTOR describes this with making some connections to actual writings of Herodotus.

Annotation:
The article reviews the Xenophon’s book of Cyrus the Great: The Arts of Leadership and War. In this article writer emphasizes the connection made by Xenophon between Cyrus’s biography and his success as a leader and as a conqueror who never neglected the moral values. As it is mentioned in the article, Xenophon tried to put Cyrus at the highest level morality and kinship.

Newspaper Article:

Annotation:
In a small section of this article, it is referred to the Cyrus cylinder. The cylinder of Cyrus the Great was discovered in 1878 by the Assyrian archaeologist Hormuz Rassam in his excavations at the site of Babylon. This cylinder is the first declaration of human rights inscribed in ancient cuneiform writing. In this great historical piece, Cyrus promotes religious and cultural tolerance that all the religions and traditions must be respected. Cyrus cylinder tells us about the great qualities of mankind and how a great king should be. A part of the writing is the description of conquest of Babylon by Cyrus and how he freed the Jews and allowed them to return to their homes. Today the original discovered cylinder is kept at the British museum for the public view and also a replica of it is at the United Nation (UN) in New York as the oldest human right declaration document.
Annotation:
The article describes the history and physical characteristics of Cyrus’s tomb in which Cyrus was buried in. The tomb was discovered in 1954 among the ruins of Pasargade (The ancient Persian capital) and is now a UNESCO world heritage site. According to archaeologists there have been some inscriptions on the walls of the tomb which had Cyrus’s final statements about himself. “O man, whoever you are and wherever you come from, for I know you will come, I am Cyrus who won the Persians their empire. Do not therefore grudge me this little earth that covers my body”. However these inscriptions were later destroyed by Muslim invaders.

Alexander the Great, who saw Cyrus as a great ruler, always liked to visit his tomb at Pasargade. When he conquered Persia, he visited the tomb and showed his respect to it and asked to add his statements next to Cyrus’s inscriptions. Although there is little left from the city of Pasargade, but the tomb of Cyrus remained in a very good condition after thousands of years.

Annotation:
It is interesting to know that the mentioned company above is producing a 2 hour movie on Cyrus the great. The movie will be directed by Alexa Jovy, the British director. The production will cost over 100 million dollars making it the most expensive independent movie in the history of cinema. Spenta production was founded by Cyrus Kar who traveled throughout the central Asia and Middle east to find out more about this great historic figure. The cast of the movie are not announced yet, but the director said that he is going to use from some of the best actors and actresses in Hollywood and British movie industry. He also mentioned that his aim is to make Cyrus more known to mankind. The exact date for the start of shooting the film is not known yet. It is worth watching the first film based on Cyrus the Great.

Annotation:
There is a word in Holy Quran (The Islam’s holy book) called Zul Qarnain which describes a historic figure with many great qualities. There have been many debates among the scholars to know this figure in history. Some historians claimed that Zul Qarnain refers to Alexander, and some named Cyrus the Great. To be logical, we find more similarities between the qualities mentioned in the Quran and character of Cyrus the great rather than Alexander’s. This article describes this matter more by making a good comparison between Cyrus the Great and Alexander. It is important to mention that none of these figures are approved to be the one in the book and the answer to this question is not known yet.

Annotation:
As it can be understood from the title, this book specifically covers the biography and history of two of the greatest rulers of all the time, Cyrus and Alexander. As it was mentioned before, little is known about Cyrus’s early life, but this book provides some useful information about Cyrus's childhood as the youngest member of his family, however these informations can not be verified. As the author mentioned in her preface of the book, to know our history and civilization, whether east or west, we have to know about these two kings who made the most significant impacts on our lives. Most of the information on Cyrus is based on Herodotus’s and Xenophon’s sources which have been reviewed by Jacob Abbott. In some parts of the book, the author made defined some similarities and differences between Cyrus and Alexander. If
you are interested about these two great historical figures, I definitely recommend this book.