

Americanization of benjamin franklin assignment

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Benjamin Franklin was born into a large and modest family, the fifteenth of seventeen children; he grew up underprivileged, but with hard work and determination, made it further than anyone in his social standing could have ever dreamed. Franklins father was a candle maker, which was considered “one of the lowliest of the artisan crafts. (Wood 17)” When he was of a young age, his father decided that a formal education would be too expensive, and entered him instead into an apprenticeship as a soap and candle maker.

Apprenticeships at that time were regarded as “the principle means by which cost young men prepared for the world. (Wood 18)” Franklin, however, had other ideas about his preparation for the world, and after a short amount of time, convinced his father that he would thrive better in the printing trade. Franklin chose a craft that required the most amount of intellect for his time, but was rarely given the credit it deserved. Printing required an education composed of spelling, reading, and writing, which was rare for that time.

Writing competently was such a rare skill that anyone who could do it well immediately required importance. (Wood 20)” A gentlemen, as opposed to a monomer, could be defined easily by majority of the colonists. John Adams said that someone who was common was easy to spot, because they were often “from ordinary parents and could scarcely write {their} name. ”

Gordon believes that a gentleman was able to be distinguished as such if he “came from being independent in a world of dependencies, learned in a world only partially literate and leisured in a world of laborers. Gordon 38)”

While gentlemen shared a sense of freedom and entitlement to rights in the colonies, indentured apprentices did not. Gordon states that this large unfreeze population” couldn’t enjoy simple luxuries like getting married,

gambling, playing cards, or even leaving without their masters permission. As more and more immigrants from Germany and Ireland began to pour into the colonies, the number of indentured servants rose exponentially. According to Gordon, at least half of the population of Philadelphia was composed of indentured servants, as this is how many acquired their passage to the New World.

These new immigrants, not all of which were servants, expanded the social structure by introducing new commerce, trade, and manufacturing. These people could not be put into either the cluster of rich or poor, but instead, found themselves in the middle. Franklin became the average “middling” man, because he “possessed the attributes of a gentleman while still remaining one of the common working people. (Wood 42)” The economy boomed due to new found raw materials, trade routes, and manufacturing businesses that appeared throughout the land.

The wealthiest artisans could at last receive the opportunity to interact with the “upper social ranks. (Wood AY’ Though this mingling of the classes became more popular, it was halted by hostilities to ideas such as Franklin’s notion of paper currency. The rich feared paper currency because it put their income and inheritance into reality, and encouraged them to work in order to maintain their titles. The poor supported the notion, because it provided more jobs, and allowed them to possess physically their incomes and savings. Franklin’s thoughts shifted closer and closer to those of a gentleman.

He began to form the idea that only those people “free of the need for money should participate in politics. (Wood AY’ His idea of the New World

included bonding to the structure of labor England upheld. America, had cheap land and expensive labor. This was because there was so much land, that the average laborer with knowledge of the land could buy property and maintain a healthy lifestyle. In England, however, there wasn't enough land for a poor commoner to buy, so the only alternative was to work for someone who owned land, or enter into manufacturing.

Franklin provided another opportunity for colonists by forming a more functional postal service in America. Secure jobs in the postal service helped the colonies become aware of each other's presence in the country. Franklin, deadest on increasing communication and harmony in the colonies proposed a colonial union. With the growing rate of different religions, opinions, and cultures, Franklin thought a common thread would help the county cooperate and act as one. This proposal worried the British officials, who saw the union as a threat against the crown's rule over the land.

Franklin, enthralled with British government and culture, wanted nothing more than to increase respect for the "mother country" and British society in the New World. Capon his visit to England, Franklin became an intense loyalist, devoted to the crown and its authority, hungry for all things British. He related greatly to the freedom of social mobility in England, where he remarked that "a poor man's son has a chance, if he studies hard, to rise to an extraordinary level to have a voice in Parliament, to govern Nations, and even to mix his blood with Princes. Wood AY' Franklins loyalty proved to cloud his judgments in events such as the imposition of the Sugar Act of 1764. While colonists revolted at the notion of his tax, Franklin ignored their anger, and stated that molasses was "generally rather luxuries than

necessities. (Wood 107)” Franklin was resented for this support, and was even more so blamed and hated for his role in the Stamp Act. Franklin regarded this tax on all legal documents as unpleasant, but reasonable.

Franklin's main goal was not to appease the colonists, although this happened when the Stamp Act was repealed, but instead to unify Britain and its colonies as one nation, rather than separate entities. Franklin proposed American representation in Parliament to act as a mediator between America and Britain, but upon his examination in the House of Commons in 1765, he was utterly disappointed when British officials declared it their right to impose taxes on the colonies.

Franklin argued that the colonists were not opposed to duties regulating commerce, but to internal taxes that “ were never supposed to be in parliament, as we are not represented there. (Wood 120)” Franklin stated that the colonies were “ not supposed to be within the realm; they have assemblies of their own, which are their parliaments. British officials were outraged at this idea, because they believed that this meant they were declaring themselves exempt from British official rulings. Franklin fought the notion and said that the colonies were subject only to the king, not the Lords.

Franklin regarded the colonies as “ states in the empire, subject to no parliamentary authority whatsoever. (Wood 136)” Franklin's rejection by Hillsboro, who was the secretary of state for American affairs, to become the agent for the Massachusetts assembly, fostered even more resentment for British officials. The last straw was cut when Franklin appeared before the

House of Lords with a plan to low only external affair duties to be imposed on the colonists, and he was shot down without even having time to propose it.

Franklin turned his mind from loyalty to the crown, to loyalty to America and its future. Franklin became the most potent weapon America possessed against Britain, and with him came large strides towards independence. People who agreed with Franklin formed the group of rebels known as the Patriots, while those who sided with Britain became known as the Loyalists. This political stratification formed the largest rift in America until the Civil War, pitting brother against rather, in the name of the crown.

Though the French were reluctant to support Franklin due to supporting a rebel cause against a king, they chose to do so with the thought in mind that they would gain a military and a commercial alliance with a powerful nation in the making. When speaking about the newly forming government to a French correspondent, Franklin told him of the struggles the nation was facing because it was so diverse. With every great idea came strong opposition from one group or another. The nation was no longer as easily controlled and able to be fit into one frame f mind, but was instead a large melting pot of opinions and cultures.

With the expanding cultural differences, came new forms of labor and societal structure. At the very bottom of the chain were the slaves. Newly popular due to their free and forced labor, these people were denied any rights whatsoever, and were regarded as more of objects and property than human beings. Franklin called this practice and “ atrocious debasement Of human nature,” and demanded that abolitionists not only work for the end to

slavery, but also work “ to instruct, to advise, and to furnish them with employments edited to their age, sex, talents, and other circumstances. Wood 227)” In 1790, Franklin signed a motion to request the abolition of slavery in the United States. Though it failed, he was substantially different than when he was a younger man who valued money over morality. Franklin died in the spring of that year, and all of France and America felt the tremendous loss. Franklin, who influenced the growth in societal structure, as well as the independence of a nation, was a beacon of light in the dark to many people of many countries. His ability to make a nation rise out of the ashes with thing but determination and a small education continue to influence diplomats and citizens around the world.