

Autobiography of benjamin franklin

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Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Before the arrival of Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, books were out of reach for most Americans especially in the 1720s. Since only the wealthy and the clergy could afford the expensive books, Ben Franklin, being a book lover, decided to collaborate with a philosophical association known as the Junto. From this, they drew around fifty subscribers with each one of them contributing forty shillings towards the launching of the library. Obeying the noble call, the members also agreed to contribute at least ten shillings every year in order to help maintain the library. From his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin states: And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. I drew up the proposals, got them put into form by our great scrivener, Brockden, and, by the help of my friends in the Junto, procured fifty subscribers of forty shillings each to begin with, and ten shillings a year for fifty years, the term our company was to continue. We afterwards obtained a charter, the company being increased to one hundred: this was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous (Franklin 63). The library had significant impact on Franklins publications in that through the library, he managed to expand his democratic space in disseminating newspaper articles. As for the local community, the establishment of the library improved the intelligence of the farmers and tradesmen through the acquisition of more knowledge by reading (Franklin 63). While Franklin spent spared some time for leisure, his main interest in life was to improve his character and intelligence continually through the formulation and practice of various virtues. Besides enlightening the public about the political correctness of certain acts by governments by cartoons, Franklin deeply reflected upon and upheld some thirteen virtues that he <https://assignbuster.com/autobiography-of-benjamin-franklin/>

committed to practice each one of them on a daily basis. Benjamin Franklin was undoubtedly a man of impeccable work ethics in addition to his enviable moral outlook. Perhaps his firm adherence to his virtues could be an explanation as to his renowned humility and industry as far as publications are concerned. Franklin reflects the following as the foundation for his cherished virtues: In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition (Franklin 67). While Benjamin Franklin was pursuing his moral perfection quest, he utilized a number of approaches ranging from community work, benevolence, dissemination, and practice of the thirteen virtues. By engaging in various developmental projects like establishing a public library in Philadelphia, Franklin as inculcating the virtue of resolution and by publishing newspaper articles, he perpetuated the virtues of sincerity and honesty. Overall, Benjamin Franklin was successful in his quest to perfect his moral values in that in most countries he traversed during his missions and projects, a vast majority of residents appreciated his noble courses. Besides, his numerous inventions and publications speak volumes about the moral values he upheld. However, one virtue that at one incident challenged him Franklin to maintain. His reaction towards Collins who refused to row the boat during one of the voyages was out of order. By throwing Collins out of the boat, Benjamin Franklin exhibited extremity and not moderation although Collins could swim. Many people could not keep up with Franklin's

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unrivalled moral standards and virtues with some concluding, “ a speckled axe is best” to mean that a man need not to fully adhere to the moral virtues but have a few taints of character in order to maintain friends (Franklin 71). Indeed, Benjamin Franklin was a religious man as depicted in his constant mention of his close association with and acknowledgement of God. From his childhood, Christian his parents brought him up under Christian doctrines particularly those belonging to the Presbyterian Church (Franklin 52). He proceeds to mention that although Sundays were his study times, he never missed to appreciate the presence of the Divine Power that was God. He organized his timetable in such a ways that he would allot some time for God besides his fixed schedule (Franklin 65). In elaborating on his life successes and prosperity, Franklin points to the blessings of God as having had a hand (Franklin 4). And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I owe the mentioned happiness of my past life to His kind providence, which lead me to the means I used and gave them success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me, in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done; the complexion of my future fortune being known to Him only in whose power it is to bless to us even our afflictions (Franklin 5). Works Cited Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: (illustrated)*. Boston: MobileReference. com, 2010. Print.