

John howard essay sample



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This paper intends to look into “ *John Howard’s*” life – – it includes his: “ *life / birth, beliefs, position, Bedfordshire prisons, 1774 Parliamentary Acts, , John Howard’s book, Death, as well as, Howard League for Penal Reform* ” (John Howard Society of Victoria n. p.).

Birth

“ *John Howard* ” was born in Hackney, London in 1726 (BBC n. p.). His father was into upholstery business and so when his father passed away when he was only sixteen years old, he inherited a lot of money, giving him a chance to dwell on his “ *estate in Bedfordshire* ” (BBC n. p.).

Beliefs

He believes that all individuals should at the end of the day accept individual responsibility “ *for the criminal justice system* ” and so he did everything he can to contribute largely to the change badly needed when he was assigned as the “ *Sheriff of Bedfordshire* ” (John Howard Society of Victoria n. p.).

Position: Sheriff of Bedfordshire

When he turned forty seven years old, “ *he was appointed high sheriff of Bedfordshire* ” wherein his major responsibility was to take charge of and oversee the “ *county jail* ” in the aforementioned location (BBC n. p.). The position assigned to him gave him the opportunity to experience the “ *shocking, undesirable, and inhumane conditions* ” in “ *Bedfordshire* ” (BBC n. p.). He realized how bad the situation is since he was also able to see other prisons located in the entire England (BBC n. p.).

Bedfordshire Prisons

He found out that jailers were not paid by the government and that they manage to survive only because the prisoners pay them to (BBC n. p.). In fact these is why the prisoners can eat, have beds to sleep on to, and other essential things which they need (BBC n. p.). The problem is that in such kind of a system, only the prisoners who can afford to give money are the ones who may experience the luxury of food, bed, etcetera (BBC n. p.).

Unfortunately, those without money are faced with hunger, discomfort in their sleep, etcetera (BBC n. p.). In addition to that, individuals who were detained or kept locked up in prison but were later found not to be guilty and were then ordered to be released were not allowed to do so by the jailers unless the prisoners pay the jailers the amount demanded by the latter (BBC n. p.).

1774 Parliamentary Acts

“ *John Howard* ” did not like what he saw and so he moved for jailer’s fees to be abolished (BBC n. p.). He also moved that the system in prisons be developed (BBC n. p.). Fortunately, his ideas and propositions were accepted; this “ *led to two 1774 Parliamentary Acts* ” (BBC n. p.). What he did to inspire such laws to be enacted was to submit reports in the “ *House of Commons* ” (John Howard Society of Victoria n. p.). The prisoners later were benefited with the following: “ *1) medical care; 2) provision of food; 3) expedient release of prisoners when so ordered by the courts; 4) that younger prisoners be separated from older hardened prisoners; 5) that men*

and women have separate prisons and; 6) that prisoners have access to work and activity” (John Howard Society of Victoria n. p.).

“*John Howard*” was disappointed though when the “*Parliamentary Acts*” were not stringently complied with and so just a year later, what he did was to visit “*Scotland, Ireland, France, Holland, Flanders, Germany, as well as, Switzerland*” (BBC n. p.). Six years after that, he also toured the prisons of “*Denmark, Sweden, and Russia*” (BBC n. p.). Then in 1782, he also went on to check the prisons located in “*Spain and Portugal*” (BBC n. p.).

John Howard’s Book

He was even able to write a book entitled, “*The State of Prisons in England and Wales... and an Account of Some Foreign Prisons*” wherein he took note of his experiences with his 7-year prison visits (BBC n. p.). He was able to describe some of the worse he has seen in his travels (Farrar 57). He said that the prisons were too small for several prisoners and that they were also suffocated because of inadequacy of windows (Farrar 57). In fact, he stated that “*the prisons were, for the most part, too small for the numbers they contained; they were therefore crowded, and as the windows were very few and very small, the prisoners wanted air as well as room*” (Farrar 57).

He also stated that there were no real guards and no appropriate walls to lock up the prisoners; instead irons were placed to try to keep the prisoners from escaping (Farrar 57). He added that “*many feet under ground were used as sleeping apartments, and in many places no bedstead or bedding of any kind was allowed; not even strew were furnished; the damp earth was all*

the poor creatures had to lie on” (Farrar 57). It was not at all different from his area of responsibility – “ Bedfordshire” (Farrar 57).

Death

He died in January 20, 1790 because of typhus which he acquired in Kherson, Ukraine (BBC n. p.). He died while looking into “ *Russian military hospitals* ” (BBC n. p.).

Howard League for Penal Reform

Seventy six years after he died, the “ *Howard League for Penal Reform* ” was established in his honor (BBC n. p.).

Works Cited

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