

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

**The Autobiography**

Rocky Vigilante

Subject

Professor

Date

He was considered as one of the most extraordinary human beings that ever contributed much influence knowledge in the world. He was the most sensational figure of all during his American time. He provided Americans a new nation and a more defined character and identity. He was a writer, a diplomat, an inventor, a businessman, a humorist, a scientist, an international celebrity, a civic leader, a musician, and enormously genius. He was named Benjamin Franklin.

He was claimed to be the founder father who awakened the human kind to development. The colleagues of George Washington had a hard time imagining if Franklin will be able to touch the lives all human kind. Ben Franklin, an entrepreneur was made of flesh rather than a marble. He was given a name so ordinary where no one even himself comprehended how will he be someone to rest of the inhabitants of the world. He led us to the stage of history where our eyes will sparkle with the discoveries and spectacles that we will see. He had spoken to us through his writings, inventions, deeds, knowledge and wisdom. He, said by others, may not be profound as we expect for someone who is an inventor, but we can never deny that we are greatly influenced by his works.

According to Elliot (2005), Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston on January 17, 1706 by a tallow chandler by trade Josiah Franklin who had seventeen children. He was the fifteenth child and the tenth among all the boys. Like most New Englanders, the Franklins lived in a modest way of life. Benjamin was involved into his father's business after he finished grammar school when he was eight until ten years old. He still entered the employ of a cutler despite of finding the work uncongenial. When he turned thirteen, he worked with his brother James with a new printing press and had just gotten from England. Benjamin was able to learn the printing trade and therefore devoted his spare time in improving his education. His influences are "Pilgrim's Progress" by John Bunyan who was a British preacher, "Parallel Lives" by a Greek

essayist named Plutarch, Daniel Defoe's "Essay on Projects" who was an English journalist and novelist, and "Essays To Do Good" written by Cotton Mather who was an American Congregational clergyman. Benjamin was also able to pursue a goal of mastering in prose style when he had a copy of the third volume of "Spectator" who was written by the British statesmen and essayists Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele.

When his brother James established the "New England Courant" in 1721, he was already busy in delivering newspaper by day and in composing various articles at night, at the age of fifteen. His articles won wide notice and acclaim though published anonymously. The "New England Courant" lost popularity of colonial authorities because of its liberal bias.

Having several disagreements with James, Benjamin decided to leave Boston and transfer to Philadelphia in October 1723. There made trades to earn a living and made plenty of confidants, especially to the provincial governor of Pennsylvania, Sir William Keith. Benjamin was persuaded to move to London to be able to complete his learning as a printer as well as to purchase the needed equipment to pursue his own printing establishment in Philadelphia. When he turned eighteen, he just found out, his means of living occurs in a strange city. But because of being resourceful, he was still employed in two printing houses in London. And because of his distinguished appearances and accomplishments, Benjamin earned recognitions in the literary and publishing world.

Srodes (2002) said, Franklin went back to Philadelphia in October 1726 to resume his trade. He organized a group discussion called as "Junto" with the following year with a number of acquaintances. He bought the "Pennsylvania Gazette" in September 1729. It was a very dull, uninformed and poorly proofread newspaper, wherein he made large make over. He made it to a

very witty, entertaining and informative kind of paper to read. Before having a trip in England, he had already met a girl named Deborah Read whom he married in 1730.

Benjamin Franklin was able to engage in various public projects. He founded one of the first subscription libraries in America in 1731 and named it as the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1742. Benjamin, under the pen name of Richard Saunders, he first published “Poor Richard’s Almanack” in 1732. This publication abruptly produced a number of volumes and gained popularity because of an American range of appreciation for its fresh and practical contents that greatly affects the American character. Franklin became the clerk of Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1736 and eventually appointed as the deputy postmaster of Philadelphia. During these years, Benjamin was already organizing the first fire company.

He was also introducing methods in improving the street paving and lighting. Benjamin was always interested in scientific studies wherein in 1743, he founded the American Philosophical Society. It is an organization that promotes science. Around 1744, he devised means to diminish the excessive smoking of chimneys. He also invented the Franklin stove, which provided much heat while having less fuel.

According to the Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia (2005), Benjamin started his electrical experiments in 1747. He used simple apparatuses coming from Peter Collinson in England. He made advancements by making a theory called the “Leyden” jar presenting a hypothesis that lighting is an electrical phenomenon, where he also proposed effective methods of proving this fact. This plan was published in London and traveled to England and France before performing his much awaited experiment in 1752, the kite. Benjamin invented the lighting rod, offered the “one-fluid” theory, explained two kinds of electricity (positive and negative), and many other scientific theories and explanations. He also suggested a curriculum

that will consider a program of classical studies. Here, Language is emphasized as well as Mathematics and Science.

Benjamin became extremely popular with his scientific reputation, his wit and gracious manner and his integrity of character in French literary, political, social circles, wisdom, and ingenuity of securing the United States. His scientific standing made him won an appointment from the French king as one of the commissioners who investigates phenomenon of animal magnetism. Franklin always had an opportunity in meeting and conversing with a number of philosophers and leading figures during the French Revolution because of his effort in implementing a profound influence. Franklin, in March 1785 requested to leave his duties in France and return to Philadelphia. He was then elected as a delegate to a convention in the U.S. Constitution in 1787. After three years, Benjamin Franklin died at the age of 84.

Not all of Benjamin Franklin's comrades in revolutionary arms grieved his passing when he was laid to rest in Philadelphia. The proposal of state secretary Thomas Jefferson about the difficulty to identify where to draw the line was declined by President George Washington. Those who despised Franklin in the Senate under the influence of John Adams also chose to pass on obsequies.

Based from Stevenson (2003), recently, though the bull market has given patriotic sentiments, Franklin was view not just in a new and more elegant edition, but also in inspirational texts, television programs, management tracks and biographies which all stars the good doctor with what James Srodes opinion as "the essential Founding Father" in one of his latest biographies. Franklin's alter ego, "Poor Richard" in the Almanack could have pondered,

"If your Riches are yours, why don't you take them with you t'other World?" But, where is immortality when you could not even get slot in making your life in a history channel series?

Morgan (2002) asked, what best can be brought out when someone reads the life and works of Benjamin Franklin, wherein there are numerous biographies that can be found in any material or in library subscriptions that can make one fond? Carl Van Doren's "Benjamin Franklin" in 1983 was said to be more definitive by many critics. It even leaves more mark to an art of a biographer. The book aimed and achieved a complete record and narration of Franklin's discoveries of the world. Having a reader read it, he/she may think that it is well written. The book shows an overindulgent of Franklin's tedious part – his love. For instance, of making craft lists for himself – his beliefs, guides to proper behavior and character and steps toward moral perfection. The book primarily agrees occasionally to the contradictions and complexities of Benjamin's character and can never do wrong with the whole subject.

Van Doren was led into an absurdity. The contents of the book defines Benjamin Franklin someone who was not ambitious, which I strongly agree, for he made all his studies, researchers, theories and inventions with no jealousy, envy and vanity. Benjamin would not put the people at risk just to implement a change in the society, even in the world.

Benjamin Franklin, in his eighty-four years of conquering the world, can never be denied as the America's genius – an inventor, a scientist, a writer, a business strategist, a diplomat, and one of the most commemorative political thinkers, though not most profound. Benjamin was able to prove that by flying a kite, by lightning an electricity and by inventing a rod to tame it, the whole world will change. He created devices for cleaning stoves. He made charts and theories about the contagious environment of the common cold. He pioneered the concept of self-

made civic improvement. He launched such schemes that will lend libraries, insurance associations, volunteer fire corps and matching-grant fund raiser.

Benjamin Franklin invented America's unique touch of philosophical pragmatism and homespun humor. He proposed plans that are seminal in politics for uniting the colonies as well as creating national government that will have a federal model. He was even claimed as the most responsible of all founders who instilled a virtue in the nation that focuses on the central role of the struggles of the world, specifically in tolerance and religious tolerance.

Later critics felt something toward Franklin's values that was instinctively more comfortable with the democracy for his fellow founders devoid the concept of snobbery. He had faith with regards to the wisdom of an ordinary man and made his veins ran into a new nation that would draw strength, which he called "the middling people". Through Benjamin's urge of self-improvement techniques for cultivating human virtues, and through his schemes that are civic improving for all mankind, he was able to create and commemorate a new kind of ruling class of ordinary citizens that will learn to be tolerant and considerate of the various beliefs and culture of every man.

Franklin is a successful publisher and worker with much exploration that has a particular resonance in the our times. He would even feel the information revolution in his own environment. Any man today may imagine having a quality time with Benjamin today after office hours or even after school, and teach him how to use the internet and palm pilots, or even share a business plan for a new discovery and even discuss Bill Clinton's latest computer advocacies and George Bush's foreign policy. He might even laugh with our latest jokes regarding a rabbi, a priest, a senator or even just an ordinary citizen. We can easily admire his

simple words but huge ideas. We can adapt his manners in thinking, speaking, writing and dealing with the problems of the world. Some might see the reflection of Benjamin Franklin in our world today. We can identify his techniques in balancing reputation, earthly virtues, wealth, spiritual values and knowledge. But some do honestly fret with the way they deal with all the situations that occur in our lives today. Some people know they are being shallow in contemplating our culture.

They say Franklin teaches us on how to live our lives practically but not in a way that we are going to exalt the existence of spiritual and natural passions. At present, it seems everything is under assault from radicals, elitists, modern people and religious fanatics because they see the same reflection and they are unconsciously admiring the basic middle class values and democratic sentiments. It is true, that still, many critics admire Franklin as an achiever for building personal identity and civic virtue that are obviously lacking in our world today. Much of our qualms and admirations are warranted. But the lessons that we can get from Franklin's life are more complex than to those who are always drawn by either his/her confidants or foes. Many critics are too often confused with the struggling conquest that he portrayed in his whole life.

By serving the country that he always deared, and by being determined in achieving salvation through good deeds, Benjamin Franklin's morality was built on a sincere belief that led him to live a meaningful life. Because of all his hardships in discovering many fields, it made him link the gaps. He was able to comprehend God's will by discovering so much from the natural creations and earthly virtues. He also made a heavenly link for all human kind.

A phrase from Time (2005) says "To pour forth benefits for the common good is divine." – a motto that he placed in a library where he founded.

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