

Benjamin Franklin Autobiography

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Benjamin Franklin was one of the most important figures in the history of our country. He was a founding father and an inventor, scientist, printer, politician, freemason and diplomat. One can say he was a jack of all trades. Ben Franklin helped draft the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, as well as negotiating the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War. His life as a young man was extremely well documented in the second edition of the “Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin” put out by the Yale University Press, and edited by Edmund S. Morgan. The autobiography dives into Franklin’s early life experiences and beliefs up until about December 1759. His entire life was filled with different kinds of work and employment opportunities ever since he was maybe 14. He was put to work at an extremely ripe young age but he always excelled at it, especially if it was something he enjoyed and if it was something he wanted to become better at. His work and employment experiences were both very similar and different to other colonists during the time like Eliza Pickney, Gottlieb Mittelberger, Mary Rowlandson and John Winthrop.

During Benjamin Franklin's early life he had a variety of jobs. He was born on January 17, 1706 in Boston, which was known as the Massachusetts Bay Colony. His father had 7 children with his first wife and 10 more children with his second wife. In total Ben had 17 brothers and sisters and Franklin was the 15th youngest son. While Franklin did have a very nice

education, it is his job and employment opportunities that stand out the most. One could describe Franklin as a 'scrappy' child, not because he appeared dirty, but because whenever he wanted something he worked as hard as he could to achieve his goals even if he started ten feet lower than the people he was competing against. Franklin worked extremely hard at everything he did even if he did not enjoy the duty he was given. When Franklin was 10 his father took him in as an apprentice at his soap and candle shop. Franklin absolutely despised that kind of mundane work, he wanted to work himself up and do something more meaningful. This is very much like Eliza Pickney. Eliza was also extremely young when she started working, maybe not as young as Benjamin Franklin but non the less young. She ran her father's farm while he was away at war. Unlike Franklin, she enjoyed working for her father, the job gave her a sense of purpose in a time where women usually did not have much purpose. She was also very well educated like Benjamin was, she could write very well and spoke very agreeably. Eliza had a very close but very professional relationship with her father, which is something Ben franklin did not have with his own father. Whereas Franklin wanted to do more with his life than work at his father's soap business, Eliza was very pleased to run her father's business on her own. She would write her father a letter while he was at war and tell him all the things that are going on with the crop that season whether it be good or bad. Not only did she work very hard most of the time, she also made plenty of time for activities that she enjoyed to do. She would walk in the garden, spent time with her music, have social outings with friends, and would stitch in the evening. This is also something Ben did very well, although he worked very often, he made time to practice the things he enjoyed, which was writing.

In 1717 Franklin's brother returned from England to begin his printing business in Boston. At the time Franklin was maybe 16 years old and was infatuated with the sea, he wanted to become a sailor but his father strongly disagreed and thought it was no proper job for such a well educated young man like himself. With this in mind, Franklin's father sent him to be with his brother Josiah and work for him as an apprentice until he was 21 years old.

At this point it is very obvious that Franklin will never be without a job because there is always work to do, even if it isn't the most agreeable. This idea would fit very nicely with John Winthrop's views of the world. John Winthrop was the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony and he was the 'chief figure' among the puritans. Winthrop was passionately religious and wrote his speech "City Upon a Hill" in order to emphasize social and religious unity. Winthrop believed in a strong and united community no matter what one's social status was. One can infer that he would agree with Franklin upbringing because not only did he get a well rounded education, Franklin was given many opportunities to earn a living when he had nothing. This reason would put a smile on Winthrop's face. Winthro claimed that no man was to ever be left behind and that is exactly what Franklin's father made sure didn't happen to him, even when Franklin was a rebellious 18 year old and left home anyways to pursue his own agenda. One this Winthrop would also agree with Franklin's frugality. It does not have much to do with employment but it is connected because the money Franklin had was because of the jobs he was given. Franklin was an extremely Frugal man and did everything he could to save his money while watching all the men around him waste the wages on beer and food. Franklin would have rather starved himself one night than to spend his earnings on a meal that he did not necessarily need. Now, in Winthrop's perfect world Franklin would never go hungry which was mostly

always the case but there was always an exception. Winthrop would agree with Franklin's way of life and job opportunities seeing as Franklin was also a very giving man. He shared what he could and helped with what he could.

Franklin eventually left Boston where he found employment at the printing house of Samuel Keimer. While he was there he slept at John Read's house where he met his soon to be wife Deborah Read. During this time Philadelphia had become one of the most important trading centers and major ports. Franklin's view of Philadelphia was much like Gottlieb Mittelberger. They both envisioned Philadelphia almost like a promise land. Around the time that Gottlieb Mittelberger arrived Benjamin Franklin was already deep into politics and had successfully lobbied for legislation from the Pennsylvania Assembly. Gottlieb Mittelberger was a German author. Gottlieb believed that work and labor in the new land was very difficult, which is a differing opinion from Franklin because he could always find a job. Gottlieb did not see Philadelphia as much as a promise land as Winthrop and Franklin did. He actually found the treatment of European immigrant to be extremely barbaric and soon returned to Germany claiming that his journey to North America was very much 'not to his taste'

Mary Rowlandson paragraph goes here, have not figured out how to spin the comparison or contrast yet, I will let other people give me suggestions

Overall Franklin had a very fruitful life and most other colonists agreed with his views. Franklin was raised in a world where it was only customary to work if you were a young man. There were always opportunities for him to achieve. Will finish my conclusion when more of my paper is put together and will reassess my thesis statement when all my facts are in order.

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