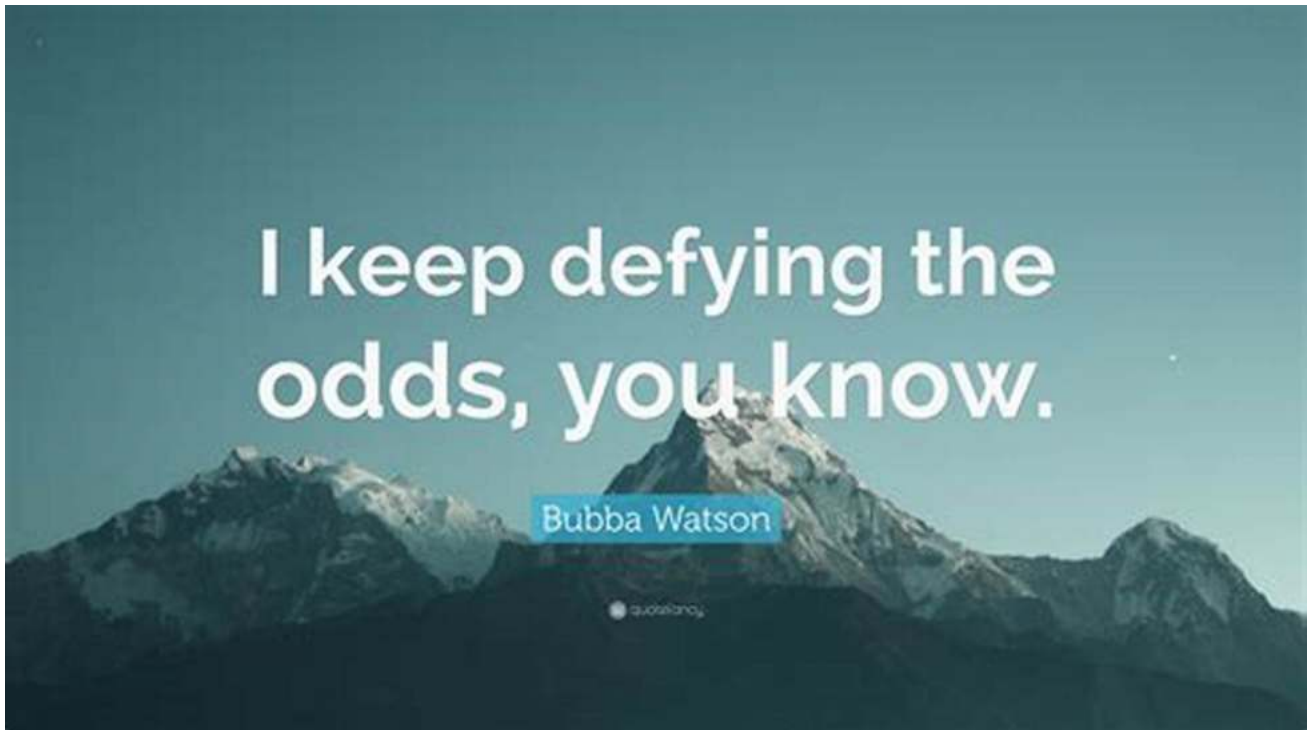


# Poor Richard Women: A Closer Look at Their Remarkable Lives

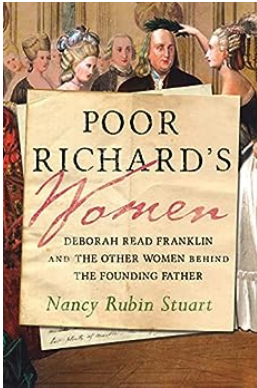


When we think of Poor Richard, we usually envision Benjamin Franklin and his influential almanacs. However, behind the scenes and amidst the history of America's founding, there were remarkable women whose contributions tend to be overshadowed. These Poor Richard Women led lives that defied societal norms and had a profound impact on the course of our nation. In this article, we delve into their stories and celebrate their indelible mark on American history.

## The Forgotten Pioneers

Their names may not roll off our tongues as easily as Franklin's, but the Poor Richard Women were pioneers in their own right. Throughout the late 18th century, while America fought for independence, women like Deborah Read,

Sarah Bache, and Mary Crowninshield Eliot steadfastly supported the revolution both on the homefront and in the public sphere.



## Poor Richard's Women: Deborah Read Franklin and the Other Women Behind the Founding Father

by Nancy Rubin Stuart (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3425 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

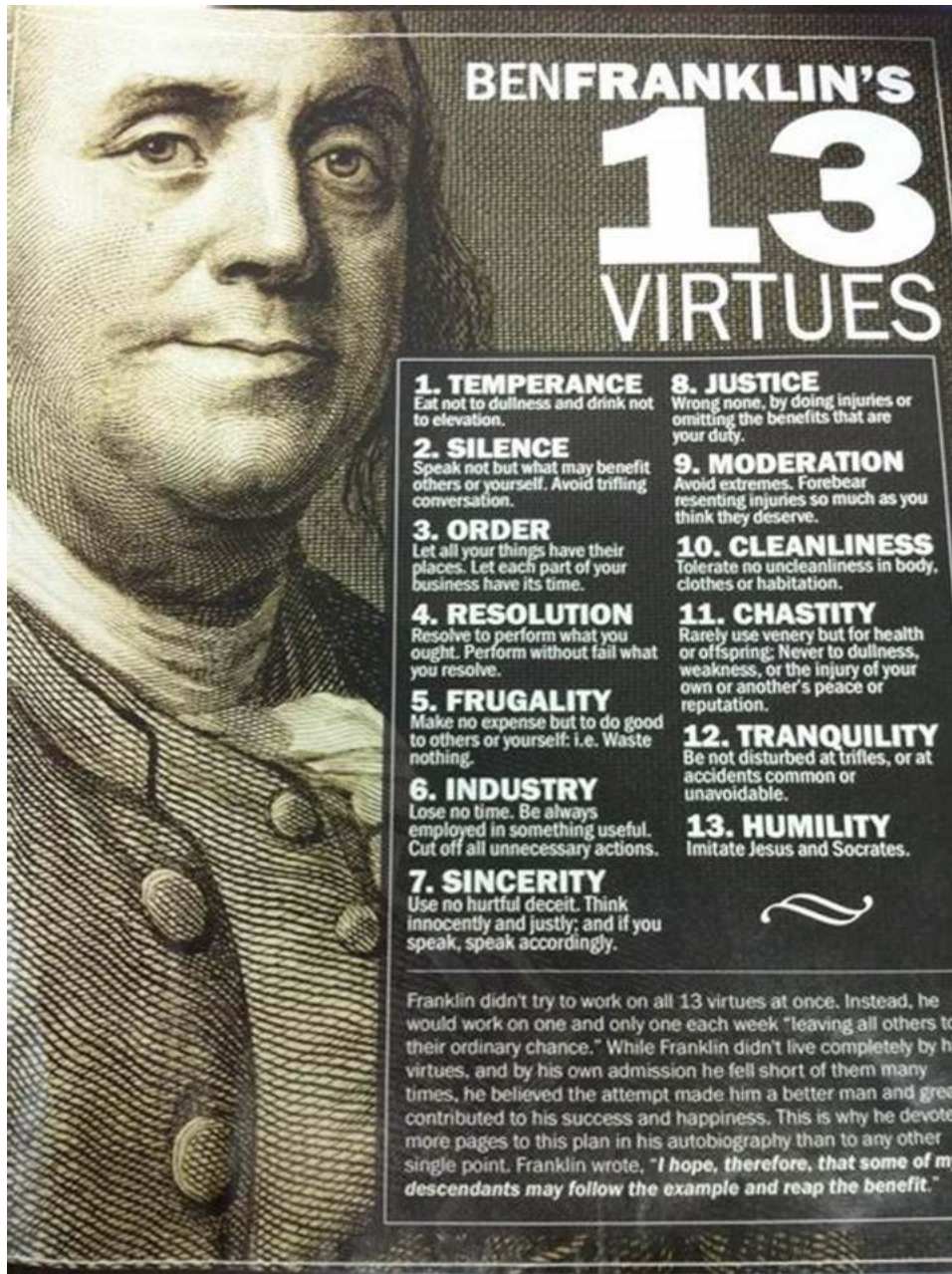
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 221 pages



Deborah Read, Franklin's wife, was more than just a loyal partner. She managed the family business, handled logistics during her husband's diplomatic missions, and contributed to his scientific pursuits. Read was not content with a passive role; she actively engaged with the issues of the time.



Sarah Bache, Franklin's daughter, was another notable Poor Richard Woman. Deeply involved in philanthropic endeavors, she championed causes such as education, healthcare, and women's rights. Bache founded the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum, which nurtured countless children and became a prominent institution in the city.

Mary Crowninshield Eliot, though geographically removed from the epicenter of American independence, used her influence and wealth to support the patriots' cause. Eliot provided financial aid and opened her home to soldiers and those displaced by the British army during the Revolutionary War. Her commitment to aiding the war effort earned her a place in history as a compassionate and devoted woman.

## **Trailblazers in Women's Rights**

The Poor Richard Women were not content with conventional roles. They defied expectations and played a pivotal role in advocating for women's rights during an era when such ideas were revolutionary. Their voices resonated as they campaigned for equal access to education, job opportunities, and the right to vote.





Deborah Read, in particular, expressed her progressive views on women's rights through her extensive correspondence with influential figures of her time. She articulated the importance of education for women, stressing that an educated female populace would greatly benefit society as a whole.

Sarah Bache championed women's education as well, advocating for the establishment of schools and colleges that would provide females with the necessary tools to succeed and contribute in an evolving world. Bache understood that education was a catalyst for social change.

Mary Crowninshield Eliot, in addition to her efforts during the Revolutionary War, worked tirelessly to drive the conversation about women's rights. Her wealth and

connections allowed her to gather influential men and women, fostering dialogues that began shaping a more inclusive vision for the future.

## **Legacy and Inspiration**

The Poor Richard Women continue to inspire generations of women today. Their resilience, determination, and ability to transcend societal boundaries serve as a testament to the strength and potential of women throughout history.

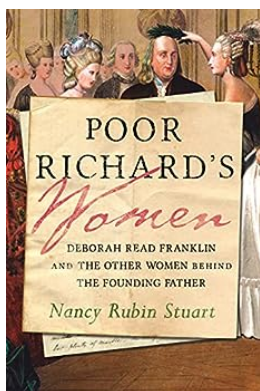


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Deborah Read, Sarah Bache, and Mary Crowninshield Eliot proved that women could lead in various domains and spearhead change, even during a time when the odds were stacked against them. Their relentless dedication to their causes

laid the groundwork for future women's rights activists who fought fiercely for equality.

Today, we pay tribute to these unsung heroes of the American Revolution, the Poor Richard Women who shaped the course of history without receiving the recognition they truly deserved. Their stories serve as a reminder that the strength of a nation lies not only in the accomplishments of its most famous figures but also in the resilience and determination of the countless women who have made invaluable contributions along the way.



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“An engrossing look at the human side of Benjamin Franklin . . . Using a post-feminist lens that’s critical of gender essentialism, Stuart rescues these women from obscurity . . . This is a terrific read: poignant, provocative, and probing.”

—Library Journal, Starred Review

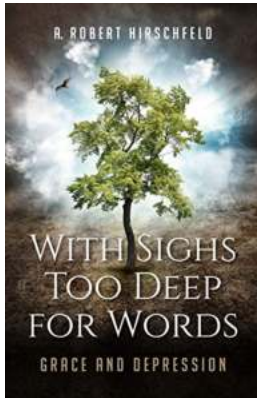
A vivid portrait of the women who loved, nurtured, and defended America’s famous scientist and founding father.

Everyone knows Benjamin Franklin—the thrifty inventor-statesman of the Revolutionary era—but not about his love life. *Poor Richard's Women* reveals the long-neglected voices of the women Ben loved and lost during his lifelong struggle between passion and prudence. The most prominent among them was Deborah Read Franklin, his common-law wife and partner for 44 years. Long dismissed by historians, she was an independent, politically savvy woman and devoted wife who raised their children, managed his finances, and fought off angry mobs at gunpoint while he traipsed about England.

Weaving detailed historical research with emotional intensity and personal testimony, Nancy Rubin Stuart traces Deborah's life and those of Ben's other romantic attachments through their personal correspondence. We are introduced to Margaret Stevenson, the widowed landlady who managed Ben's life in London; Catherine Ray, the 23-year-old New Englander with whom he traveled overnight and later exchanged passionate letters; Madame Brillon, the beautiful French musician who flirted shamelessly with him, and the witty Madame Helvetius, who befriended the philosophes of pre-Revolutionary France and brought Ben to his knees.

What emerges from Stuart's pen is a colorful and poignant portrait of women in the age of revolution. Set two centuries before the rise of feminism, *Poor Richard's Women* depicts the feisty, often-forgotten women dear to Ben's heart who, despite obstacles, achieved an independence rarely enjoyed by their peers in that era.





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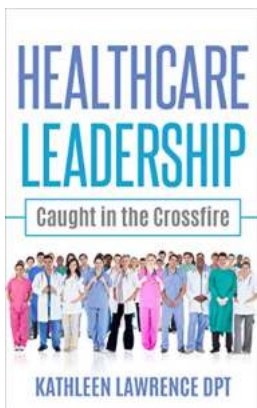
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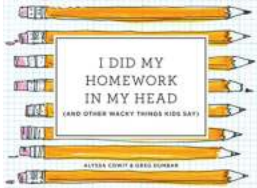
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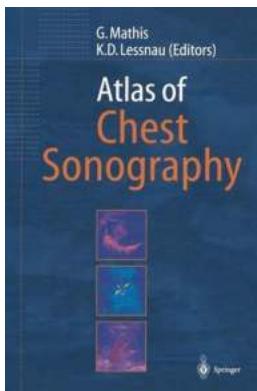
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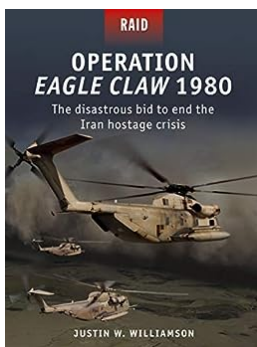
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