

Colonial Philanthropists

Benjamin Franklin

Franklin helped establish the first subscription library in the American Colonies. The members of this library contributed money to buy books, and then used them free of charge. Fire losses in Philadelphia were alarmingly high, and Franklin organized a fire department. He reformed the city police when he saw that criminals were getting away without punishment. City streets were unpaved, dirty, and dark, so he started a program to pave, clean, and light them. Philadelphia shamefully neglected the sick and insane during Franklin's time. He raised money to help build a city hospital, the Pennsylvania Hospital, for these unfortunates. Scholars in the American Colonies had no professional organization, so Franklin helped establish the American Philosophical Society, with headquarters in Philadelphia. The city had no school for higher education, so Franklin helped found the academy that grew into the University of Pennsylvania.

Squanto

Squanto helped the Pilgrims by showing them how to plant and pop corn and fertilize the soil, directing them where to catch fish, and taught them how to trap beaver.

John Harvard

On September 14, 1638, John Harvard, a 31-year-old clergyman from Charlestown, Massachusetts died, leaving his library and half his estate to a local, newly established college. The young minister's gift provided the college with some needed stability. In his honor, it was called Harvard College.

Sacagawea

Accompanied by her infant son, Sacagawea accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition west. Her memory of Shoshone trails proved valuable, as well as her knowledge of useful foods and medicines along the way. Her presence as an Indian woman with a baby helped to convince Indians that this party of whites was friendly. And her translation skills, however indirect, from Shoshone to English, were also invaluable.

Quakers

Quakers have been known throughout their history for their humanitarian activities. They reject war and stress peace education. They have been pioneers in removing barriers to racial equality and have been among the leaders in prison reform and in the humane treatment of mental patients.

Benjamin Lay

Lay was a Quaker abolitionist who wrote *All Slave-keepers that Keep the Innocent in Bondage* (Philadelphia, 1737). He was one of the earliest public advocates for the emancipation of enslaved Africans.

