

Sitting With History

Volume 3



Written by
Students in the
Department of History

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY
THE PREMIER LIFE SKILLS UNIVERSITY

Department of History

Foreword by Dr. Andrew Tzavaras
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Acknowledgments

Thank you to the following High Point University members:

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Dr. Daniel Erb, Provost

Ken Elston, Dean Douglas S. Witcher School of Humanities and
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David Bryden, Director of Library Services

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Lee Adams, University Photographer

Christina Cavanaugh, Print Shop Manager

Smith Library Media Services

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Volume 3, 2026

Department of History, High Point University

Printed by Smith Library Print Shop, High Point University

Digitized by HPU Libraries, High Point University

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Foreword Volume 3

Dr. Andrew Tzavaras
Assistant Professor of History



As both an undergraduate and graduate HPU alumnus and now Assistant Professor of History, it is with great humility and honor that I introduce this third volume of *Sitting with History*, a continued collaboration between the students and faculty of the History Department at High Point University.

This collection of essays, written by our dedicated majors and minors, reflects the intellectual rigor, empathy, and curiosity that define our academic community. Each piece explores the life and legacy of a historical figure honored on our campus, offering readers a deeper understanding of the values these individuals represent, their enduring relevance, and the ideals we aim to instill within our students.

This volume features a compelling array of thinkers, reformers, and pioneers — Aristotle from antiquity and impactful figures from United States history: Benjamin Franklin, Sacagawea, George Washington Carver, and Martin Luther King Jr. Their presence on our campus is not merely symbolic; they call us to action. As HPU students, faculty, staff, and visitors pass these statues on their way between buildings, their metallic gaze reminds each of us of the transformative power of knowledge, resilience, courage, and service and sparks us to learn more about their extraordinary lives. Through their research and writing, our students have followed that very spark to bring these figures to life, connecting the past to the present and inviting us to reflect on our own potential to lead, inspire, and pioneer across all physical, intellectual, cultural, and other transcendent boundaries.

During my years as an HPU student and faculty, new statues have continually joined our family and they have ended up in new places as our campus continues to grow. Yet, one thing remains constant. At High Point University, we aspire to surround ourselves with innovators – both current and historical examples – as well as foster an inspiring environment. The essays in this volume exemplify this ambitious mission. They are the product of our students’ thoughtful inquiry, careful analysis, and a commitment to excellence. More than that, our students have composed a testament to the enduring relevance of history in shaping informed, empathetic, and responsible citizens of our country and the world.

As you read these pages, I invite you to consider not only the achievements of the individuals profiled here but also the voices of the students who wrote about them. Their perspectives illuminate the enduring impact of historical figures and demonstrate how the study of history equips us with the tools to navigate an ever-changing world – and how the compassionate faculty and inspiring environment of High Point University plant seeds of greatness within each student.

“Life is very short and anxious for those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear the future.” – Lucius Annaeus Seneca, (c. 4 BC – AD 65)
...but fear not! Equipped with knowledge and wisdom, High Point University students stand at the ready for the world as it is and will become.



Aristotle

Kayla Wylie 2025

It is often said that history is written by great people. After all, it was their curiosity, innovation, and dreams for better futures which pushed limits and inspired change within their societies. On High Point University's campus, we honor a multitude of such men and women with statues, but one in particular stands out. Aristotle was a Greek philosopher, scholar, and teacher whose scientific research and academic writings left a lasting impression on Western intellectual life. He possessed a passion for learning, an insatiable curiosity, and a relentless drive to understand the world around him. Using these gifts, Aristotle's life-long ambition was to selflessly "promote the discovery of truth and to increase the sum of human knowledge" and educate future generations.¹ Therefore, while many famous historical figures deserve to be represented at HPU, Aristotle's strong character and achievements resonate deeply with the university's student body, who value the same ideals of innovation, moral character, and academic excellence.



Before Aristotle became the revered philosopher and scholar we know today, he was just like any other student: young, ambitious, and full of promise. Born in 384 BCE in the northern Greek city-state of Stagira, Aristotle's early childhood was shaped by both tragedy and triumph. As a child, Aristotle lived with his father Nicomachus, a physician with connections to the Macedonian royal court. Sadly, while he was still young, his father tragically died and Aristotle was left in the care of his uncle, Proxenus of Atarneus. Both men played major roles in Aristotle's early education and provided him with essential skills he used later in life. For

¹ Jonathan Barnes, *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18.

example, under his father's tutelage, Aristotle learned the basics of a physician's trade. This not only introduced Aristotle to biology and anatomy but ignited what would become a life-long interest in the natural sciences. His father's connection to Macedonia also left an impression on Aristotle, who, as an adult, formed ties with the powerful state—a decision which led to major consequences towards the end of his academic career. His uncle Proxenus also left his own mark on young Aristotle, balancing his education of the sciences with literary subjects like poetry and rhetoric. As a result, by the time he departed his childhood home in 367 BCE, Aristotle had become a persuasive speaker armed with a sharp wit and possessed a studious, inquisitive nature which followed him for the rest of his life.

While Aristotle's family life and early education shaped the foundations of his academic career, his experiences in Athens, Greece's cultural epicenter, would forge him into one of the most well-known and respected philosophers in history. At the age of seventeen, Aristotle joined the illustrious Greek philosophical school, the Academy, as Plato's student. At the time, Plato was considered one of the greatest Greek philosophers and his Academy was one of the most prestigious learning institutions in the ancient world. As a student, Aristotle stood out amongst his peers due to his intelligence and scholarly mindset. He preferred reading, observing his surroundings, and using the evidence he gathered to formulate conclusions rather than depending solely on public debate and the words of his mentors. Additionally, unlike most of his contemporaries, Aristotle was not afraid to challenge popular sentiments and question long-standing beliefs. In his later years, he frequently criticized the teachings of his fellow philosophers and strongly encouraged his students to do the same. Even Plato, his life-long friend and mentor, was not immune to his criticism.

Although Aristotle greatly admired and aspired to be a true philosopher like his mentor, this did not mean they always saw eye to eye. During his lifetime, Aristotle refuted or outrightly rejected many of Plato's

teachings, but their most well-known philosophical disagreements concerned Plato's "Theory of the Forms." According to Plato's theory, the sensory world was an unreliable source of knowledge as it was possible for the senses to be tricked or diluted. As a result, Plato claimed true knowledge was located outside of the sensory world in a separate 'Form' and could only be obtained by reasonable thought. While Plato's ideas were widely acclaimed at the time, Aristotle criticized the theory for being too abstract and for blatantly disregarding the sensory world's value as a source of knowledge. Encouraged by his past experiences and scientific observations, Aristotle argued that the senses were reliable because all living things depended on sensory experiences to learn and survive. Therefore, while Aristotle respected Plato and other philosophers of his time, he also rejected popular claims and presented alternative arguments if evidence pointed elsewhere. As a result, while he often clashed with his fellow intellectuals on numerous occasions, Aristotle's critiques were made to stir up discourse and challenge questionable ideas with the goal of enriching the academic community.

Aristotle remained at the Academy for twenty years accumulating knowledge and expanding his horizons, but in 347 BCE, he suddenly left Athens and did not return for over ten years. However, despite Aristotle's departure from the city, this was far from the end of his academic career. During his time away, Aristotle conducted groundbreaking scientific research which laid the foundation for studies in biology and zoology for the next two thousand years. Recorded in over a dozen separate volumes, Aristotle's *On Animals* and *Dissections* collections provided readers with illustrations depicting over a hundred species and detailed notes on their anatomy, behavioral patterns, and growth phases. These works were considered the most significant of Aristotle's scientific contributions, but he also compiled additional treatises on fields of astronomy, meteorology, chemistry, physics, and botany. Therefore, despite Aristotle's departure from the Academy, he remained a committed philosopher and eagerly

continued his quest for knowledge. As a result, Aristotle not only gained fame and widespread recognition for his discoveries during this period but pioneered new fields and made important discoveries which are still remembered today.

While Aristotle focused most of his energy toward his various studies, research was not his only endeavor. In 343 BCE, Aristotle's intelligence caught the attention of King Philip II of Macedonia, who invited Aristotle to court to oversee his son's education. Aristotle agreed, and for the next eight years, he would play a prominent role in the life of the prince, who would one day be known as Alexander the Great. As a royal tutor, Aristotle taught Alexander ethics, politics, medicine, and philosophy. He also educated the future king in Greek mythology and Homer's epics including *The Iliad*. These lessons not only provided Alexander with the practical knowledge a ruler required but later inspired him to emulate his heroes by conquering Persia and all the lands in the East. However, despite the success of these lessons, they were not to last. After Philip II's assassination in 336 BCE, Alexander was crowned and with his new responsibilities was unable to continue his lessons with Aristotle. Because of this, in 335 BCE, teacher and student parted ways, and Aristotle returned to Athens.

Armed with the knowledge acquired during his time abroad, Aristotle came back to the city determined to pass on his teachings to the next generation of Greeks. To accomplish this, Aristotle established his own philosophical school called the Lyceum. Although typically referred to as a 'school,' the Lyceum was also very different than the universities of the modern era. Because Aristotle prioritized spreading knowledge and encouraging others to strive for excellence above all else, he not only refused to be paid but also ensured that his lectures were accessible to anyone, not just his students. Aristotle gave lectures on a variety of topics, ranging from discussions about the natural sciences to long explanations on metaphysics, ethics, and political theories. While Aristotle wrote many

of his own treatises, his students also compiled notes during his lectures and produced additional works credited to him. These include his two most well-known philosophical treatises, *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, and a plethora of other titles such as *The Art of Rhetoric*, *On Justice*, *On the Poets*, *On the Soul*, *On Pleasure*, *On Plants*, *On Motion*, and *On Astronomy*. In total, it is estimated between there were 150-200 works recording Aristotle's scientific research and lectures. Unfortunately, less than a quarter of these precious documents remain. Most were lost, ravaged by the elements or purposefully destroyed, but even so, Aristotle's surviving ideas still contributed significantly to the scientific and philosophical communities for hundreds—if not thousands—of years.

Although he was well-respected amongst his peers and idolized by his students, towards the end of his life, Aristotle's academic career fell into a steep decline. Political instability stemming from Alexander the Great's death in 323 BCE caused Athens to experience a resurgence of anti-Macedonian sentiments. As a result, Aristotle's prior connections to Macedonia and his foreigner status came under public scrutiny, which caused him to fear for his life and ultimately flee the city. Aristotle's final days were not spent roaming the grounds of his beloved Lyceum, but in self-imposed exile in Euboea. Aristotle died from a stomach ailment only a year later at the age of 62, but despite his tragic end, his legacy as a brilliant philosopher-scientist continued to live on.

Aristotle's works and accomplishments not only influenced Greek society thousands of years ago but have since echoed throughout history. Roman political and moral philosophy, which laid the groundwork for Western legal systems, was shaped by Aristotelian thought. Additionally, during the medieval period, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish scholars extensively studied Aristotelian works, and his ethical and metaphysical views became important features of their religious philosophies. However, his ideas not only shaped the foundation of Western philosophy and intellectual life but continue to mold new generations to this day.

Therefore, for the students at High Point University, Aristotle's statue on campus not only honors the great philosopher, but also, serves as a reminder of our values and what is possible when we strive for excellence.

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George Washington Carver

Gerardo Orlando Charles Gramaglia 2027

Throughout history, there have been countless individuals whose lives and work have shaped the world in profound ways—each leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire and challenge us. Some are remembered for their revolutionary ideas, while others are celebrated for their ability to turn their vision into action. Among these influential figures is George Washington Carver, whose contributions as a scientist, educator, and inventor not only changed the course of agricultural history, but also, exemplify the values of excellence, experiential learning, and social responsibility. At High Point University, we honor Carver’s legacy with a statue on our campus, a reminder of the powerful impact one person can have when they dedicate their life to improving the world. His story is more than just a chapter in a history book- it is a call to action for us all to live with curiosity, compassion, and a commitment to making a difference. Carver overcame the hardships of being born into slavery to become one of history’s most celebrated scientists and educators. His dedication to using his talents for the greater good, particularly in improving the lives of poor farmers, shows what it means to care for and help others. Carver’s life is a prime example of how knowledge can create positive change. His legacy of innovation, perseverance, and service should inspire us at High Point University to strive for excellence, and use our education to make a meaningful impact in our communities and beyond.

Born into slavery around 1864 in Diamond, Missouri, George Washington Carver’s early life was marked by hardship and loss, yet it laid the foundation for his legacy as a groundbreaking scientist, educator, and humanitarian.² His mother, Mary, was kidnapped when he was an infant, leaving Carver to be raised by Moses and Susan Carver, the couple who

² Linda O. McMurry, *George Washington Carver: Scientist and Symbol* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 12.

had enslaved his mother. Despite their poverty, the Carvers freed George and encouraged his early interest in education, fostering a love for learning that became the driving force of his life. In the post-Civil War South, Carver faced the harsh realities of segregation and racism, yet his insatiable curiosity and determination to learn flourished. Spending his early years on the Carver farm, he immersed himself in the natural world- observing plants, animals, and the land. Recognizing his potential, the Carvers sent him to a school for African American children, where he stood out. At age eleven, Carver left home to seek more formal schooling in Kansas, encountering prejudice and limited resources along the way. However, his unwavering persistence eventually led him to Iowa State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University), where he became the first African American to earn both a bachelor's and a master's degree in agricultural science.³

At Iowa State, Carver's innovative work in plant biology and mycology earned him recognition and set the stage for his groundbreaking contributions to agriculture.⁴ His scientific curiosity and dedication to improving farming practices revolutionized agriculture and changed the lives of countless farmers. Carver's journey from slavery to becoming a renowned scientist is a testament to resilience, determination, and the transformative power of education. His story resonates deeply with High Point University's commitment to empowering students to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential. Like Carver, HPU emphasizes the value of education as a tool for personal growth, social mobility, and meaningful impact.

³Mark D. Hersey, *My Work Is That of Conservation: An Environmental Biography of George Washington Carver* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 34.

⁴Gary R. Kremer, *George Washington Carver: In His Own Words* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 55.

Carver's groundbreaking work in agricultural science revolutionized farming practices, particularly in the South.⁵ When he joined Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in 1896, he began a four-decade-long journey of teaching and research focused on service. His work aimed to help poor farmers address the challenges of Southern agriculture. Generations of reliance on cotton had depleted soil nutrients, trapping farmers in cycles of poverty. Carver's innovative methods, such as crop rotation with nitrogen-fixing crops like peanuts and legumes, restored soil fertility and diversified farming practices. Carver would develop over 300 peanut-based products, including oils, dyes, plastics, and fuels, as well as more than 100 uses for sweet potatoes, such as adhesives, rubber, and flour.⁶ What stands out is the accessibility of his innovations. Carver was not creating for the elite- he focused on teaching farmers practical solutions using resources they already had. His approach to sustainability and self-reliance remains relevant today as we face global challenges in resource management.

At HPU, we are encouraged to think creatively and apply knowledge to solve real-world problems, much like Carver did. His legacy is a reminder that true innovation lies in creating practical, sustainable, and inclusive solutions. Carver's holistic approach to education should also inspire us. At Tuskegee, he was not just a researcher but a mentor who integrated science with an understanding of nature, community, and humanity. This reflects HPU's focus on cultivating well-rounded individuals who are skilled and socially responsible. As we reflect on Carver's work, we should be moved by his commitment to lifting communities out of poverty. His life should inspire us to motivate others to take that leap of faith, whether it is starting a business or excelling in

⁵ Tuskegee University Archives, "Legacy of Dr. George Washington Carver," accessed January 6, 2025, <https://www.tuskegee.edu/support-tu/george-washington-carver>.

⁶ George Washington Carver, *How to Grow the Peanut and 105 Ways of Preparing it for Human Consumption* (Tuskegee Institute, 1916), 10.

academia. His life should challenge all of us to approach education with passion, curiosity, and a commitment to service in order to make a meaningful impact on the world.

George Washington Carver's commitment to hands-on learning and mentorship reflected his belief in the transformative power of active engagement, the process of being actively involved in learning experiences. He saw education as more than reading textbooks or memorizing facts—it was about experiencing knowledge firsthand, discovering ideas through trial and error, and applying learning in real-world contexts. Carver not only taught by example, embodying the values of diligence, integrity, and passion, but also demonstrated the importance of hard work through his own life—from his agricultural innovations to his groundbreaking contributions in botany and chemistry.⁷ His dedication inspired students, creating an authentic learning environment that motivated them to succeed with integrity and purpose. This well-rounded approach to education combined science, art, and spirituality, encouraging students to view the world from different perspectives. Carver believed that science was better when combined with creativity and a sense of spirituality. He often shared how he found inspiration in nature, seeing it as a reflection of something greater than himself.⁸

Carver's dedication to service was evident in his decision to remain at Tuskegee Institute despite lucrative offers elsewhere. Carver's life is the epitome of using knowledge and talent for the betterment of others. His belief that success is measured by one's positive impact aligns with HPU's goal of preparing compassionate leaders who will make a difference in the world. His legacy continues to inspire future generations to pursue education not for personal gain, but for the greater good.

George Washington Carver's life is a testament to the profound impact one individual can have on society. He was not just a figure of

⁷ McMurry, *Scientist and Symbol*, 65.

⁸ Hersey, *My Work Is That of Conservation*, 57.

regional importance but a nationally recognized symbol of innovation and perseverance. His expertise in agriculture, particularly his promotion of crop rotation and the development of alternative crops like peanuts and sweet potatoes, earned him accolades that extended far beyond the scientific community. Carver advised two U.S. presidents, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt, on agricultural policies that had far-reaching effects, particularly in the rural South. However, his role went beyond just offering scientific advice—he used his influence to help shape national policy regarding broader societal issues, such as poverty, race relations, and economic reform. In 1923, Carver was honored with the prestigious Spingarn Medal by the NAACP for his outstanding achievements, specifically his work in promoting agricultural practices that empowered poor farmers.⁹ But perhaps one of his most selfless acts was in 1940, when Carver donated his life savings to establish the George Washington Carver Foundation.¹⁰ His intention was clear: to ensure the continuation of his educational and research endeavors long after his own passing. This donation represented a deep commitment to his life’s work, ensuring that future generations of students would have the resources to further his research and continue his mission of service. Carver’s legacy transcends his many accolades and achievements.¹¹ His contributions to agriculture, education, and social service serve as a powerful reminder of the impact that one dedicated individual can have on society. It is no surprise, then, that Carver is honored at institutions like our very own High Point University. By remembering Carver, the university honors someone whose achievements shaped history and expresses its commitment to developing leaders who want to make a real difference in society. Carver’s life is a powerful example of integrity, humility, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge—values that we, as students at HPU, should strive to embody.

⁹ Kremer, *In His Own Words*, 78.

¹⁰ Tuskegee University Archives, “Legacy of Dr. George Washington Carver.”

¹¹ McMurry, *Scientist and Symbol*, 103.

His journey encourages us to carve our own paths to greatness while always keeping in mind the importance of contributing to the greater good.

High Point University's mission is deeply aligned with the principles embodied in the life and work of George Washington Carver. Carver's pursuit of excellence, his emphasis on experiential learning, and his dedication to social responsibility all reflect the core values that HPU strives to instill in us students. Carver did not just excel in his own field—he created opportunities for others to excel as well. Like Carver, HPU challenges us to reach our full potential, pushing the boundaries of what we believe we can achieve, “To be Extraordinary!” One of the most remarkable aspects of Carver's approach to education was his emphasis on experiential learning.¹² He did not just teach concepts from books; he believed in giving students real-world experience. At the heart of this philosophy is the idea that true education occurs not just in the classroom but through active engagement with the world. Carver's innovations were not the product of abstract theories but of practical problem-solving, which aligns perfectly with High Point University's emphasis on providing students with the life skills and experiences needed to tackle real-world challenges. Carver's profound sense of social responsibility also speaks to the heart of High Point University's mission. Throughout his life, Carver worked tirelessly to improve the lives of others—particularly the disenfranchised and impoverished populations of the rural South. His dedication to service was not motivated by fame or wealth but by an unwavering belief that knowledge should be used to uplift others. This commitment to social responsibility is a cornerstone of High Point's values. HPU encourages us to use our education to serve others, whether that means addressing global issues or making a difference in our local community. Finally, Carver's journey from being an enslaved child to a celebrated scientist and humanitarian offers us a powerful lesson in

¹² Hersey, *My Work Is That of Conservation*, 73.

resilience and determination.¹³ He overcame unimaginable odds and transformed his hardships into a source of strength and purpose. Carver's story is one of breaking barriers, defying expectations, and demonstrating that the pursuit of knowledge is an empowering tool for overcoming obstacles. For students at HPU, Carver's example is a reminder that challenges are not insurmountable, but rather opportunities for growth and transformation. His legacy, as an enduring symbol of perseverance and achievement, will continue to inspire generations of High Point University students to live lives of significance, armed with the knowledge, experience, and passion to make a lasting impact on the world.

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¹³ Kremer, *In His Own Words*, 112.



Benjamin Franklin

Quinn Fergusson 2026



Among the many bronze sculptures of various historical figures lining the Kessler International Promenade, there sits the statue of an extraordinary man: Benjamin Franklin – printer, author, inventor, philanthropist, polymath, political figure, and founding father of the United States. Though he can sometimes be overshadowed in the public eye by such presidential contemporaries as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, Franklin played a key role in the formation and development of our democracy and society. His many accomplishments immensely shaped and improved the burgeoning United States of America, making him more than worthy to be commemorated at High Point University.

Benjamin Franklin lived a long and impactful life. Born to Josiah Franklin and his second wife, Abiah Folger Franklin, on January 17, 1709, Benjamin was the youngest son of seventeen children.¹⁴ Josiah, a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler by trade, sent his son to grammar school at the age of eight with intent for a career in the church, but soon changed his mind upon learning the cost of such a venture, as he could not readily afford a college education.¹⁵ Though he did very well in grammar school, young Ben Franklin was sent to a school for writing and arithmetic, but at age ten left to help his father's trade.¹⁶ Here, he worked under his father, bitterly disliking the job he had been made to do.

¹⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1757* (Auckland, N.Z.: Floating Press, 2009), 15,

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=313742>.

¹⁵ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 16

¹⁶ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 17.

However, not all hope was lost for young Frankline. Throughout his childhood, and his apprenticeship under his father, Franklin discovered a strong inclination for books and reading. His father, upon observing this disposition, at last determined to put his youngest son into the trade which he is best associated today: printing.¹⁷ In 1723, at the age of seventeen, and after serving as an apprentice under his older brother in that profession for several years, Franklin moved to Philadelphia to pursue employment in printing.¹⁸ After working for a short time in Philadelphia, he moved to London and published a piece he authored titled “A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain.”¹⁹ In 1726, however, he returned to Philadelphia, and after working briefly as a store clerk, became the manager of Samuel Keimer’s Printing House, where he had worked when he had first moved there several years before.²⁰

Within a few years of returning to Philadelphia, Franklin excelled in both his professional and philanthropic life. In 1727, he established the “Junto Club”, a dinner club of twelve fellow artisans who met weekly to discuss topics of their choice for the mutual betterment of themselves and their society.²¹ In 1730, Franklin married Deborah Read, a woman he courted for several years.²² A year later in 1731, the Junto club founded the Philadelphia library, the first public subscription library in British North America. Only five years later in 1736, Franklin founded the first volunteer fire brigade in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia’s: the Union Fire Company.²³ Around 1743, Franklin proposed the establishment of the Academy of

¹⁷ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 23.

¹⁸ Eli Bortman, “Franklin, Benjamin,” in *Encyclopedia of American Studies*, ed. Sharon P. Holland, 1st ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), <https://search.credoreference.com/articles/Qm9va0FydGjlbGU6NjczOTg=?aid=106317>.

¹⁹ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 71.

²⁰ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 81-86.

²¹ Christopher Levenick, “Benjamin Franklin,” in *The Almanac of American Philanthropy* edited by Karl Zinsmeister (The Philanthropy Roundtable, 2016), <https://search.credoreference.com/articles/Qm9va0FydGjlbGU6ODUzOTY1?aid=106317>.

²² Franklin, *Autobiography*, 113.

²³ Levenick, “Benjamin Franklin.”

Philadelphia, a non-denominational institute of higher education that was not only open to the sons of wealthy families, but any young man. The academy (later renamed the University of Pennsylvania) was opened in 1750, reaching 300 students within its first two years.²⁴ After founding the university, Franklin turned to the medical field, helping to found the nation's first hospital in 1756.²⁵

In addition to all the above-listed philanthropical achievements, Franklin was extremely accomplished in the scientific field. Though he had very little formal education in his youth, Franklin read voraciously, and conducted countless scientific experiments throughout his life. He invented various appliances, mechanisms, and instruments, such as a highly efficient metal stove, bifocals, and the glass harmonica. He charted the Gulf Stream, and suggested daylight savings time. However, one of his most important scientific ventures was into the study of electricity. In the 1740s, when the study of electricity began to fascinate the western world, Franklin read up on all the available research and literature on such.²⁶ His study culminated with what is still remembered as his most famous and historically significant experiment: in 1752, Benjamin Franklin conducted his famous kite experiment, definitively proving lightning was a form of electricity.²⁷ This experiment led to yet another of his inventions: the lightning rod.²⁸ In recognition of his experiments, studies, and writings about the properties of electricity, he was awarded honorary doctorates from the universities of St. Andrews and Oxford.²⁹

Throughout this time, Franklin also excelled in his business. By 1729, Franklin owned, edited, and published his own newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which quickly became the leading Philadelphian newspaper.³⁰

²⁴ Levenick, "Benjamin Franklin."

²⁵ Levenick, "Benjamin Franklin."

²⁶ Bortman, "Franklin, Benjamin."

²⁷ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 278.

²⁸ Bortman, "Franklin, Benjamin."

²⁹ Levenick, "Benjamin Franklin."

³⁰ Bortman, "Franklin, Benjamin."

In 1732, Franklin began *Poor Richard's Almanac*, a vastly popular and profitable annual publication in which he included a collection of household instructions, financial advice, and proverbs targeted for the larger American public.³¹ This Almanac was published for the next twenty-five years, and helped to bring together and mold an American identity in its infancy.³² What first started as a young child's passion became the foundation for a booming business – one that brought fame and fortune to a prosperous adult Ben Franklin. After a long and prosperous career as a printer, he sold his printing business in 1748 at the age of 42, and though he would still write for publications such as *Poor Richard's Almanac* for another ten years, he began to dedicate himself more fully to a life of public service in both philanthropy and government.³³

While his booming business brought him fame and fortune, it also paved his way for his entry into and influence on politics. His first foray into government service began in 1729, when Franklin published an anonymous pamphlet that proved extremely influential in the establishment of paper colonial currency.³⁴ As he excelled in his business and philanthropy, he got more involved in government, becoming clerk to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1736, and after selling his printing business, he was eventually elected a member of the Assembly in 1751.³⁵ Later, in 1757, Franklin traveled to England as an agent of the colonial assembly in London, acting as the spokesperson for Pennsylvania – and later, Georgia, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. As tensions rose between Britain and its American colonies, Franklin did his best to mediate them, successfully

³¹ Benjamin Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin Wealth and Wisdom: The Way to Wealth and the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: G & D Media, 2019), 7, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2243207>.

³² Franklin, *Autobiography*, 277.

³³ Levenick, "Benjamin Franklin."

³⁴ Franklin, *Autobiography*, 106-107.

³⁵ Bortman, "Franklin, Benjamin."

lobbying British Parliament to repeal the Stamp Tax in 1765.³⁶ However, the more heated things got between Britain and her colonies, the less success Franklin found in his lobbying efforts, and after being attacked for his efforts before the King's Privy Council in 1774, Franklin became an ardent supporter of American independence.³⁷ A year later, he returned to Philadelphia and was immediately elected to as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. He served on many key committees, helping to organize and arm the Continental Army, print money, establish the national post office, and draft the Articles of Confederation, and by June 1776, under the guidance of Thomas Jefferson, helped to draft and sign the Declaration of Independence.³⁸ In October 1776, Franklin went to France and eventually succeeded in winning French support for the American Revolution, an alliance that would prove pivotal to American military victory. He stayed in Paris throughout the war and helped negotiate the treaty with England that ended the war in 1783. In 1785, he returned to America a hero, becoming a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and helping to establish the foundations of American government.³⁹ Benjamin Franklin played a pivotal role in these early days of American history, and were it not for his revolutionary efforts at home and abroad, America as we know it may not have ever existed. He died in Philadelphia on April 17, 1790, after a life very well lived.⁴⁰

After witnessing the world's first manned hot air balloon flight in France in November of 1783, Franklin wrote a letter to Joseph Banks, an English naturalist. In it, he expressed his disappointment that England was so neglectful of producing such groundbreaking scientific experiments themselves, stating: “[y]our Philosophy seems to be too bashful. In this Country we are not so much afraid of being laught at. If we do a foolish

³⁶ Bortman, “Franklin, Benjamin.”

³⁷ Levenick, “Benjamin Franklin.”

³⁸ Bortman, “Franklin, Benjamin.”

³⁹ Bortman, “Franklin, Benjamin.”

⁴⁰ Bortman, “Franklin, Benjamin.”

Thing, we are the first to laugh at it ourselves, and are almost as much pleased with (...) the Disappointment of a Project, as we might have been with its Success.”⁴¹ This excerpt perfectly sums up Benjamin Franklin’s philosophy and mindset. Starting out as the youngest son of a working-class family, with barely any formal education, Franklin – through hard work, determination, and persistence in the face of his failures and criticisms – ended up becoming a successful businessman, philanthropist, politician, and one of the premier minds of his generation. Moreover, by surrounding himself with like-minded and admirable people, Benjamin Franklin was able to achieve far more for his country than he would have been able to on his own. His story, ambition, and philosophy serve as a fitting example for all students on the campus of High Point University, and is a great reminder to always strive to be the best self that one can be – for with a good foundation, enough ambition, and the right mindset, anyone can achieve their dreams.

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⁴¹ Benjamin Franklin and Ellen R. Cohn, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 219, <https://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.highpoint.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=839188&site=ehost-live>.

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Martin Luther King Jr.

Emily May 2025



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a visionary leader, social activist, and theologian who became the face of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. He is most often associated with his famous “I have a dream” speech given during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963. King said: “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'”⁴² His dream of a racially integrated and just society remains a prominent principle in the ongoing struggle for civil rights and social equality today. Through his unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and nonviolence, he changed the course of American history.

Martin Luther King Jr was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. Growing up in a deeply segregated South, King experienced racism and discrimination firsthand, as did many African Americans during this period. During his childhood, King had a friend whose father owned a store across from his childhood home. They played together every day from the time they were 3. When King was 6, he and his friend were enrolled in different schools, and his friend's father ordered that they would play together no more. His friend was white, and it was the first instance with which King was made aware of racism in America.⁴³ At the age of 15, he attended Morehouse College, a historically black institution in Atlanta. During his time at Morehouse, King was exposed to ideas about social justice, nonviolent resistance, and read the works of figures such as

⁴²Martin Luther King Jr and Clayborne Carson. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books, 1998), 226.

⁴³ King, *Autobiography*, 7.

Mahatma Gandhi and Henry David Thoreau. All of this learning shaped his own philosophy on civil disobedience.⁴⁴ King graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology in 1948. From Morehouse, King furthered his education and attended Crozer Theological Seminary, and then earned a PhD in Systematic Theology from Boston University.

King admired the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and adopted the idea that nonviolent resistance could bring about social change. He was deeply committed to this idea. King's notion of civil disobedience, grounded in his faith, was not seen as an act of lawlessness, but as a moral duty to resist unjust laws peacefully and with dignity. In his famous Letter from Birmingham Jail, King wrote: “[o]ne has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”⁴⁵ He argued that laws were just when they uplift human dignity and unjust when they degrade it, as seen with segregation laws that oppressed African Americans. He believed that love and nonviolent protest were powerful forces for social change, and this philosophy was central to his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement and inspired countless other movements around the world.

King rose to prominence when he became president of the Montgomery Improvement Association in 1955, organizing the boycott in response to Rosa Parks’s arrest, a Black woman who refused to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated bus. The boycott lasted over a year and resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional via *Browder v. Gayle* (1956).⁴⁶ This judicial and civil rights victory brought King to national attention.

In 1963, King led a series of nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama, a city known for its extreme racial segregation. During the

⁴⁴ King, *Autobiography*, 14.

⁴⁵ King, *Autobiography*, 193.

⁴⁶ Myra Turner, *The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Assassination 50 Years Later* (Ocala, FL: Atlantic Publishing Group, 2018), <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5723490>.

demonstration, King was arrested, it was not the first time, for violating a court injunction against protests. From jail, King wrote the famous “Letter From a Birmingham Jail,” which focused on the moral and legal basis for civil disobedience as previously mentioned. This was a strategic move on King’s part as the protests garnered national attention, particularly when police used fire hoses and attack dogs against peaceful demonstrators. This helped to galvanize the movement and draw attention to the need for federal intervention on segregation. That same year, King delivered his most famous speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom entitled, “I have a Dream.” King called for an end to systematic and societal racism, equality for all people, and the true realization of the American liberty and justice ideals.

Thanks to the efforts of King and others in the movement, significant legislative changes were made in the American political system. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 aimed to eliminate barriers preventing African Americans from voting, especially in the South. In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent struggle for civil rights and his commitment to peace and equality. He became the youngest person at the time to receive the award, which is a testament to his global impact as a symbol of peace and nonviolent activism.

On the evening of April 3, 1968, King delivered his final speech, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” at the Mason Temple in Memphis. He spoke of the struggle for justice and equality, and acknowledged the dangers he faced while also expressing his unwavering commitment to the cause of nonviolence and social justice: “I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ King, *Autobiography*, 365.

On April 4, 1968, King was tragically assassinated by James Earl Ray while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. His death led to an outpouring of grief across the nation. Despite the tragedy, King's legacy has continued to inspire generations. His teachings continue to inspire social movements today, as people fight for racial justice, economic equality, and human rights across the world. His ideas about equality, justice, and peace still influence movements for human rights and social justice globally and he will forever be remembered as one of the most influential people of the twentieth century.

High Point University has honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr by adding his statue to the numerous historical figures represented on the promenade. King held many of the same values and qualities that High Point teaches each student, such as equality, justice, and courage. During his lifetime, King spoke frequently to students about the importance of education, self worth, and service. He believed education should teach students to think critically and serve as a form of character development as students develop a sense of purpose and are called on to serve others. King is represented and commemorated on High Point University's campus as a reminder that unity and peace in the face of injustice prevail and that as students, our purpose is greater than just ourselves.

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Sacagawea

Justina Soares 2024

Sacagawea is a pivotal figure in the making of the American West through her invaluable interpretation abilities and her knowledge of the land. She helped ensure that the Lewis and Clark expedition succeeded thereby helping the United States become a coast-to-coast nation, as Thomas Jefferson, had desired.⁴⁸ Sacagawea, because of her upbringing and the hardships she faced throughout her life, was able to translate the Shoshone and Hidatsa⁴⁹ languages which proved invaluable to the Corps of Discovery Expedition. Sacagawea deserves her place on High Point University's campus as she was a strong and remarkable woman who aided in the creation of the American West.



Sacagawea was born before the Corps of Discovery Expedition had started in the Shoshone Tribe. The Shoshone Tribe were nomadic and moved from place to place in search of food and shelter. They were also under constant attack and threat from other neighboring Tribes because the Shoshone Tribe never traded or came into contact with Europeans and consequently, they did not have European weapons like their neighboring tribes.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, Sacagawea was kidnapped by the Hidatsa Tribe and since she was living with them, she started learning their language, the geography of the land, and their customs.⁵¹ Between 1800-1804, Sacagawea married a French trader, Touissant Charbonneau, and had a

⁴⁸ Sheila Griffin Llanas, *Sacagawea, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark* (Enslow: New York, 2019).

⁴⁹ Katie Griffiths, *Sacagawea: Shoshone Guide, Interpreter, and Leading Member of the Corps of Discovery* (New York: Cavendish Square, 2018).

⁵⁰ Sheila Griffin Llanas, *Sacagawea, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark*.

⁵¹ Griffiths, *Sacagawea*, 22.

child. The Corps of Expedition began during these monumental events in Sacagawea's life.⁵²

Sacagawea met Lewis and Clark while she was pregnant and she and her husband joined the explorers' expedition as language interpreters to ensure the expedition was a success.⁵³ Sacagawea was the only woman on this expedition. Throughout the expedition, Sacagawea assisted further by gathering food for the group to eat. She learned this skill because gathering and looking over the crops was a duty she had during her time with the Hidasta Tribe.⁵⁴ During the expedition, they traveled to meet and trade with the Shoshone Tribe. To accomplish this, Sacagawea was essential as the Shoshone Tribe did not trade or have contact with Europeans.⁵⁵ When Sacagawea returned to the Shoshone camp, it seems as though Lewis and Clark might have had an idea or some knowledge about her upbringing, as their journal stated Sacagawea, "was one of the female prisoners taken at that time; tho' I cannot discover that she shows any emotion of sorrow in recollecting this event, or of joy in being restored to her native country; if she has enough to eat and a few trinkets to wear I believe she would be perfectly content anywhere."⁵⁶ While this excerpt highlights they knew about her past and also that they saw her as a strong, independent, and amenable person, it also highlights another important aspect of how we know about Sacagawea. Most of what we know about Sacagawea is not from her own words or writings, but rather from Lewis and Clark.

When Sacagawea was reunited with the Shoshone Tribe, she was elated, and began to translate for the Expedition. Lewis and Clark's journals also recorded this reunion and what it meant to Sacagawea. They wrote,

⁵² Griffiths, *Sacagawea*, 28.

⁵³ Griffiths, *Sacagawea*, 39.

⁵⁴ Griffiths, *Sacagawea*, 45.

⁵⁵ Griffiths, *Sacagawea*, 52.

⁵⁶ Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Bernard De Voto, *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1997).

a woman made her way through the crowd towards Sacajawea, and recognising each other, they embraced with the most tender affection...Sacajawea was sent for; she came into the tent, sat down, and was beginning to interpret, when...she recognised her brother: she instantly jumped up, and ran and embraced him...She was frequently interrupted by her tears.⁵⁷

Sacagawea probably did not think or dare to believe that she would one day be reunited with her family members. However, because of Lewis and Clark's expedition and her unique skill set, she was able to reconnect with them and the emotion she felt throughout this encounter is evident in their journal. Throughout her interpreting for the expedition, she was many times overcome by her emotions and tears thereby showing how important her family and Tribe were to her and how loyal she was to them. The Shoshone and the Corps of Discovery did end up trading in part thanks to Sacagawea's interpreting and interactions.

The Expedition continued and the terrain of the Rockies proved to be a difficult feat for the group. The Nez Perce Tribe knew this area and worked to help the Corps of Discovery largely because of Sacagawea's inclusion; seeing a Native American woman showed the group was not dangerous to the tribe.⁵⁸ After the expedition ended, Lewis and Clark were paid for their journey. However, Sacagawea did not receive anything for her efforts despite being one of the main reasons why the Corps of Discovery was successful.⁵⁹ Thankfully, though, her efforts were recorded and today her value in the Lewis and Clark Expedition is well-known. The Corps of Discovery is important to American history because it gave information about the Native Americans who lived in the area and the geography and terrain of the land. This would lead to westward expansion

⁵⁷ Lewis, Clark, and De Voto, *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, 203.

⁵⁸ Griffin Llanas, *Sacagawea, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark*, 67.

⁵⁹ Griffin Llanas, *Sacagawea, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark*, 83.

for the United States. All of which could not have happened without Sacagawea's skills.

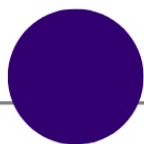
Throughout Sacagawea's life, she had to face and battle many hardships and adversity. Nevertheless, she showed selflessness and courage throughout. Today, we recognize the impact that Sacagawea had on Lewis and Clark's Expedition and note the substantial part she played in its success. At High Point University, we also learn and recognize that we are in a constantly changing world, and we should always be ready and able to adapt to life's changes calmly and confidently, as she did. Through Sacagawea's story, we can admire and learn from her tenacity and bravery. When students sit next to Sacagawea on campus, they are reminded and can look up to a selfless and valiant figure in American history.

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Sitting With History, Volume 3
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