
HEROES of AMERICA™

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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Chapter 1

A Hard Lesson

If you lived in Boston in the early 1700s, you couldn't get away from water. The city was surrounded by water. On one side was the harbor that led to the Atlantic Ocean, on the other the Charles River. There were plenty of lakes, ponds and marshes all around.

One day, in one of those marshes, a group of boys was splashing in the water trying to net fish.

"I've caught one!" a boy cried out. A silvery fish flopped and wiggled in his net.



“See Those Rocks?”

BEN FRANKLIN

“We could catch a lot more fish if this water weren’t so muddy,” one of the boys said.

“I have an idea,” another declared.

“Oh, Ben Franklin has another idea.” His friends laughed. “Another big idea.”

“Don’t my ideas make sense?” Ben said. “Remember those swimming paddles I invented? Whoever used them could swim faster than anybody.”

The boys had to admit that Ben usually knew what he was talking about. Sometimes he seemed as smart as a grown-up—or even smarter.

“So what’s your idea?” one of his friends asked.

“See those rocks?” Ben said, pointing to a big pile. “They’re nice and square. If we pile them along the bottom of the salt marsh, pretty soon we’ll have a wharf we can walk on. Then we can get to where the fish are without getting our feet wet.”

“Let’s do it!”

BEN FRANKLIN

“But wait,” one cautious boy said. “Some workmen left those stones there. They’re going to build a house with them.”

“But *we* need them for our wharf,” Ben told him. “Now let’s get to work.” Ben couldn’t resist any kind of project or adventure like this. It was fun to build things and see how they turned out.

By piling the stones up, they soon had a dry place to stand. Now they could walk farther out and place more stones.

It was a hot day. The work soon had them sweating. The boys weren’t very big, and some of the blocks were so heavy, it took three boys to carry them. Ben was taller than the rest. He grunted as he picked up stones by himself.

By evening they’d made a solid wharf way out into the marsh. It would be a perfect fishing spot.

“That really was a good idea, Ben,” one of his friends said.



“Let’s Get to Work.”