

**Travels through life:or an account of sundry
incidents and events in the life of Benjamin
Rush...written for the use of his children, [1800]**

Circa 1800

Mss.B.R89t

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Rush, Benjamin, 1746-1813
Title	Travels through life:or an account of sundry incidents and events in the life of Benjamin Rush...written for the use of his children, [1800]
Date	Circa 1800
Call number	Mss.B.R89t
Extent	8.0 Volume(s) 8 volumes, 494 p.
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Location	LH-MV-E-6; LH-MV-E-15
Language	English
Container	1-8
Abstract	This autobiography relates Rush's experiences in college and medical school; his meetings with notable doctors; his life in Scotland, England, and France; his medical views; the military and politics during the Revolutionary War; and brief sketches of personalities of that period.

Background note

Benjamin Rush was a physician, patriot, and humanitarian. He graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton), 1760, and from the University of Edinburgh, 1768. He was a member of the staff at the Pennsylvania Hospital and was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Scope & content

Includes lengthy comparison of French and Indian manners, illustrating civilization degenerating into savagery.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Biddle (\$7000.00)and accessioned, 10/12/1943.

Related Materials

Related Material

The ninth surviving volume of this autobiography is in the Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Autobiographies.
- Autobiography
- Diaries

Geographic Name(s)

- England -- Social life and customs -- 18th century.
- France -- Social life and customs -- 18th century.
- Scotland -- Social life and customs -- 18th century.
- United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- Personal histories.
- United States -- Politics and government -- 1775-1783 -- Anecdotes, facetiae, satire, etc.

Personal Name(s)

- Fothergill, John, 1712-1780
- Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790

Subject(s)

- American Revolution
- Early National Politics
- Epidemics--United States
- Indians of North America
- Marriage and Family Life
- Medicine
- Medicine.
- Philadelphia History
- Social Life and Custom
- Yellow fever -- United States.

Other Descriptive Information

All nine volumes of this autobiography have been published; see George W. Corner, ed., "The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His Travels through Life, together with his Commonplace Book for 1789-1813," *American Philosophical Society Memoirs* 25 (1948).

Other Descriptive Information

Benjamin Rush's *Travels Through Life* is his multi-volume autobiography. This manuscript copy is in his own hand and takes up eight volumes of notebooks. The APS also has another manuscript copy of the work that was written by someone other than Rush, likely in preparation for its publication. Rush wrote the autobiography for his children. The APS published portions of the diary, but segments have not been published. Notations suggest that portions that would be "offensive to surviving relatives" be omitted from publication. Other sections were crossed out but are readable and contain pertinent information. This is especially true on the section where Rush records his thoughts on prominent individuals from the American Revolution.

The diary covers Rush's life up to 1800 in intricate details. Rush describes his involvement in the American Revolution, especially his work in fomenting opposition to British policies and his interactions with many prominent revolutionaries. He provides many fascinating, lively, and important anecdotes from the events leading up to Independence, many of which were private meetings and dinners. Among those he records was witnessing Thomas Paine pen *Common Sense*. In terms of the personal, Rush describes

his studies, his travels, his thoughts, including various dreams that he had and how they affected him, and his personal life, including courting.

Aside from the personal, the journals also provide insight into Philadelphia culture and society with Rush describing what it was like to visit houses and tend to patients. He also contains short biographical sketches of “those gentlemen who were most conspicuous for their talents and virtues.”