

Dispensa sabato 7 marzo 2009

Letteratura Americana (III anno LLEM, II anno specialistiche) Modulo B

Frequenza della parola 'printer' in *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*: 27

This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted.

Franklin was a prodigious inventor. Among his many creations were the lightning rod, the glass harmonica, the Franklin stove, bifocal glasses, and the flexible urinary catheter. Franklin never patented his inventions; in his autobiography he wrote, "... as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously." His inventions also included social innovations, such as paying forward. Franklin's fascination with innovation could be viewed as altruistic; he wrote that his scientific works were to be used for increasing efficiency and human improvement. One such improvement was his effort to expedite news services through his printing presses.