American icon BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790), born in Massachusetts to a British immigrant father and colonial mother, published the famous Poor Richards Almanack, helped found the University of Pennsylvania, and was the first Postmaster General of the United States. His likeness adorns, among other things, the United States hundred-dollar bill. Benjamin Franklin was as wildly intriguing a personality as his legend suggest, and as youve always heard, as his autobiography makes plain. From his hoarding of his pay as a teenager to buy books to his askance asides at such habits as the drinking of beer, from his work as a printer to his experiments with electricity, and much more, this is the story of Franklins life-told as only he could tell it-in the years before the American Revolution. A classic of autobiography, this is must reading for American-history buffs, and for anyone fascinated by larger-than-life personalities.

My Personal Review:
Franklin wrote this autobiography as a letter of instruction in the ways of the world to his youthful and illegitimate son of 40. It only covers the first half or so of his incredible life, so the things that really made him well-known are not covered, but there is plenty here anyway. Franklin recounts his familys modest life in England and the circumstances that brought them to Boston. He was among the youngest of a very large family, ultimately finding his way to Philadelphia to find work as a printer when an apprenticeship with an older brother turned sour. We always think of Franklin as being a slightly older statesman among the Founding Fathers, when in fact he was a full generation older than Washington or Jefferson. Unlike popular perception, he was an athletic and vibrant youth, who rescued a drowning Dutch companion and taught swimming to children of Londons elite. Philadelphia in the 1720s and 1730s was a small town, never sure if it would really take off as a settlement. Franklin quickly befriended key politicians who felt Philadelphia had grown sufficiently to have a world-
class print shop. He played a key role in the towns development, leading civic groups in establishing libraries, fire companies, meeting halls, and street cleaning services. Of course, he was also the consummate politician, serving in office, and networking his way to his first fortune by publishing government documents and printing the first paper currency. He also had a knack for working with the several important religious sects of that time and place, especially the pacifist Quakers, even though Franklin was a deist.

Franklin was a clever businessman. In todays lexicon, he effectively franchised across the colonies his concept of the publisher/printer who would provide both the content and the ink on paper. By age 30, he had set up his business affairs so that his printing businesses in several colonies were operated by partners and he received a share of the profits, allowing him to pursue other interests.

The autobiography is unfinished, so we dont hear his account of his pursuits of electricity, which made him as famous and well-known as Bill Gates is today, nor his thought on the Revolution. Franklin did play a key role in establishing logistical support to the British during their fight with the French in the New World. At that time and during his years in Europe, he was generally perceived as a Tory supporter.

Read this book to learn how Franklin devoted himself to self-improvement by establishing clubs, lending libraries, a sober lifestyle allowing time for study, and his methods for measuring his personal performance against metrics he had established for a proper lifestyle. One will also gather a new appreciation for the fullness, utility, and richness of the English language when put on paper by a master.

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The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin by Benjamin Franklin - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!