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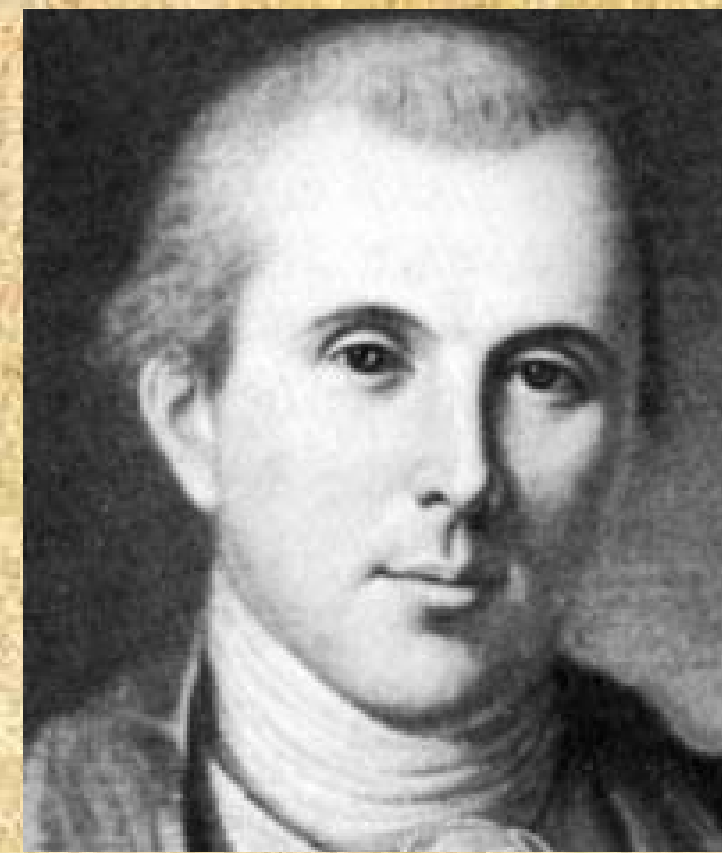
The Political Rise and Decline of Dr. Benjamin Rush



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Introduction

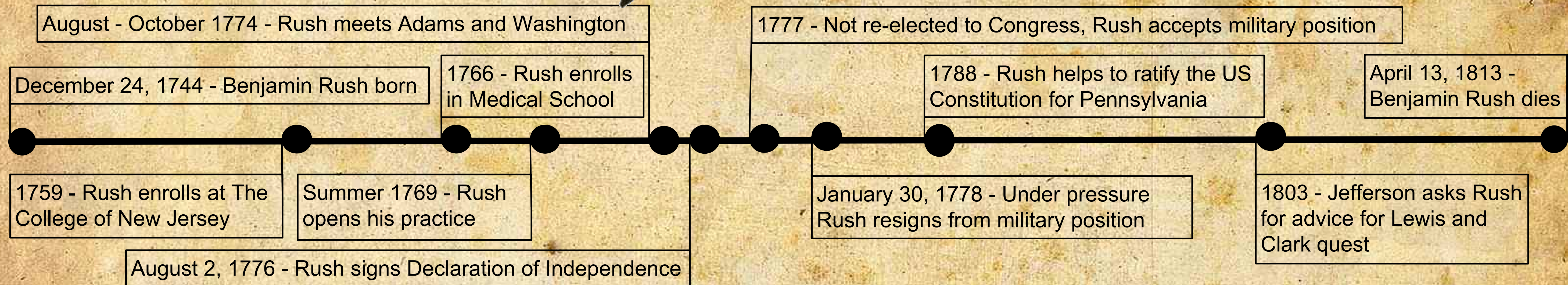
Prior to and during the American Revolution Dr. Benjamin Rush held prominent political and military position, but politically was ostracized after the defeat of the British. This research set out to examine why Dr. Benjamin Rush did not hold important political positions in the newly formed federal government after the Revolutionary War. Considering Dr. Rush's progressive social and medical views, this essay will examine why Dr. Rush might have influenced the United States to be a different country than it is today.



Benjamin Rush

Feud with George Washington

Rush became critical of the Pennsylvania Assembly and was not re-elected. He quickly was appointed to be the Surgeon General of the Middle Department. This allowed Rush to work closely with George Washington. Disliking the way the war was going and conditions in the military hospitals Rush began writing anonymously to powerful politicians calling for the replacement of George Washington. One letter found its way to Washington's desk who recognised Rush's handwriting. Rush shortly after resigned his position never to return to political prominence.



Early Life and Medicine

Rush was born on December 24, 1744 in Byberry, PA which is now part of Philadelphia. Rush's mother knew the importance of education and scraped together enough money for him to attend boarding school. He later attended The College of New Jersey, now known as Princeton. Following college Rush planned to become a lawyer but was later convinced to pursue medicine. Rush attended medical school in Edinburgh, Scotland. Rush went on to have a one of the most prosperous medical practices in Philadelphia which allowed him to develop ties in politics.

Political Rise

Rush started his rise to political prominence in the early years of the American Revolution. When the 1st Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in 1774 Rush became close with many of the delegates including John Adams and George Washington. During the 2nd Continental Congress Rush rekindled his friendships with some of the delegates. In July 1776 the Pennsylvania Assembly decided to recall their delegates. Rush was voted as one of the new delegates just in time to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Ramification of Rush's Decline

Rush's political decline and absence from political influence during America's early years surely had lasting effects. During the time in which he lived, Benjamin Rush had some of the most progressive views on slavery, women, and access to medicine for all socioeconomic classes. Had Rush simply gone about his criticisms in a more professional manner, he would have emerged from the Revolution as a prominent political figure and possibly started the country on a course towards resolving our major social problems.

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3. Rush, Benjamin, and George Washington Corner. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His Travels through Life Together with His Commonplace Book for 1789-1813*. Greenwood Press, 1970.