

Inspiring Civility: The History of Philanthropy in the United States

Introduction

Philanthropy is a defining characteristic of American society, deeply woven into the nation's history and culture. Rooted in the ideals of equality, compassion, and the pursuit of a better life for all, philanthropy has played a transformative role in shaping the United States. This book delves into the rich tapestry of American philanthropy, exploring its origins, evolution, and profound impact on society.

Throughout history, Americans have demonstrated a remarkable willingness to give back to their communities, driven by a belief in the power of collective action to address social challenges and improve the lives of others. From the early days of the

nation, when religious communities provided aid to those in need, to the rise of corporate philanthropy in the Gilded Age, Americans have consistently stepped forward to support causes they believe in.

Philanthropy has been a driving force behind many of the nation's most significant social advancements. It has played a pivotal role in establishing educational institutions, hospitals, and cultural organizations that have enriched the lives of countless Americans. Philanthropy has also been at the forefront of social justice movements, supporting efforts to fight discrimination, promote equality, and protect the environment.

While philanthropy has a long and storied history in the United States, it is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of society. In recent decades, there has been a shift towards more strategic and data-driven approaches to giving, as well as a growing emphasis on collaboration and partnerships between philanthropic

organizations and other sectors. Additionally, the rise of digital technology has opened up new avenues for giving and engagement, making it easier for individuals and organizations to support causes they care about.

This book explores these trends and developments in depth, providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of philanthropy in the United States. It also examines the challenges and opportunities facing the philanthropic sector, including issues such as the need for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as the importance of ensuring that philanthropic resources are used effectively and efficiently.

Through a combination of historical analysis, case studies, and expert insights, this book offers a nuanced understanding of philanthropy's role in American society. It sheds light on the motivations of donors, the strategies employed by philanthropic organizations, and the impact of philanthropy on various aspects of

American life. Ultimately, this book aims to inspire and inform readers about the transformative power of philanthropy and its enduring significance in shaping a more just and equitable society.

Book Description

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From the early days of the nation, when religious communities provided aid to those in need, to the rise of corporate philanthropy in the Gilded Age, Americans have demonstrated a remarkable willingness to give back to their communities. Philanthropy has played a pivotal role in establishing educational institutions, hospitals, and cultural organizations that have enriched the lives of countless Americans. It has also been at the forefront of social justice movements,

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In recent decades, philanthropy has continued to evolve, with a shift towards more strategic and data-driven approaches to giving, as well as a growing emphasis on collaboration and partnerships. The rise of digital technology has also opened up new avenues for giving and engagement, making it easier for individuals and organizations to support causes they care about.

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Key Features:

- Comprehensive overview of the history of philanthropy in the United States
- Examination of the motivations of donors and the strategies employed by philanthropic organizations
- Analysis of the impact of philanthropy on various aspects of American life

- Exploration of the current state of philanthropy in the United States and the challenges and opportunities facing the sector
- Inspiring stories of individuals and organizations making a difference through philanthropy

Inspiring Civility is an essential resource for anyone interested in the history, practice, and impact of philanthropy in the United States. It is a valuable tool for students, scholars, practitioners, and donors alike, providing a deeper understanding of the role that philanthropy plays in shaping a better society for all.

Chapter 1: The Birth of American Philanthropy

The Puritans and the Culture of Giving

The early American colonists brought with them a strong tradition of philanthropy, rooted in their religious beliefs and communal values. The Puritans, in particular, played a significant role in shaping the culture of giving in the United States. They believed that it was their duty to help those in need and to use their wealth to improve the lives of others.

One of the most notable examples of Puritan philanthropy is the establishment of Harvard College in 1636. The college was founded by a group of Puritan ministers who believed that an educated clergy was essential for the health of the colony. They raised funds from wealthy Puritans in England and America to support the college, and Harvard quickly became a leading center of learning in the New World.

The Puritans also established a network of mutual aid societies, known as "friendly societies," which provided financial assistance to members who fell on hard times. These societies were based on the principle of mutual responsibility, and they played an important role in supporting the poor and vulnerable in Puritan communities.

In addition to their charitable giving, the Puritans also believed in the importance of public service. They served in local governments, founded schools and hospitals, and worked to improve the lives of their neighbors. Their commitment to philanthropy and public service left a lasting legacy on American society.

The Puritan tradition of philanthropy continues to influence American culture today. Many modern philanthropic organizations, such as the United Way and the Salvation Army, trace their roots back to the Puritan era. Additionally, the idea of using wealth to improve society is still a powerful force in American

philanthropy, as evidenced by the generosity of many wealthy individuals and foundations.

The Puritans' commitment to philanthropy and public service helped to shape the culture of giving in the United States. Their belief that it was their duty to help those in need and to use their wealth to improve the lives of others continues to inspire Americans today.

Chapter 1: The Birth of American Philanthropy

Benjamin Franklin and the Enlightenment Ideal

During the Enlightenment, a philosophical and intellectual movement that swept across Europe and America in the 18th century, Benjamin Franklin emerged as a towering figure who embodied the ideals of philanthropy and civic engagement. Franklin's contributions to American philanthropy were multifaceted, ranging from his personal generosity to his advocacy for public institutions and his efforts to promote a culture of giving.

Franklin's commitment to philanthropy was rooted in his belief in the power of collective action to address social problems and improve the lives of others. He saw philanthropy as a moral obligation and a way to give back to the community. Throughout his life,

Franklin donated generously to a wide range of causes, including education, healthcare, and scientific research. He also played a key role in establishing several philanthropic organizations, including the Philadelphia Academy and the Pennsylvania Hospital.

In addition to his personal philanthropy, Franklin was a vocal advocate for public institutions and the role of government in providing for the common good. He believed that government had a responsibility to support education, healthcare, and other essential services that benefited the entire community. Franklin's advocacy for public institutions helped to lay the foundation for the American social safety net and the idea that society has a responsibility to care for its most vulnerable members.

Franklin also played a significant role in promoting a culture of giving in America. He wrote extensively about the importance of philanthropy and encouraged others to follow his example. Franklin's writings and

speeches helped to shape public attitudes towards philanthropy and contributed to the growing acceptance of the idea that giving back to the community was a civic duty.

Benjamin Franklin's contributions to American philanthropy were profound and far-reaching. His personal generosity, his advocacy for public institutions, and his efforts to promote a culture of giving helped to establish philanthropy as a cornerstone of American society. Franklin's legacy continues to inspire philanthropists and civic leaders to this day, reminding us of the power of giving to create a better world for all.

Chapter 1: The Birth of American Philanthropy

The Rise of Religious Philanthropy

From the earliest days of European colonization, religious beliefs and practices played a central role in shaping American philanthropy. The Puritans, who settled New England in the 17th century, brought with them a strong tradition of charitable giving. They believed that it was their duty to help those in need, both within their own communities and beyond.

Religious philanthropy took many forms in colonial America. Churches and other religious organizations provided direct assistance to the poor, the sick, and the elderly. They also established schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Religious leaders often encouraged their congregations to donate money and goods to these causes.

One of the most prominent examples of religious philanthropy in colonial America was the Great Awakening, a series of religious revivals that swept the colonies in the 1730s and 1740s. The Great Awakening led to a surge in charitable giving, as people sought to demonstrate their faith through their actions.

In the 19th century, religious philanthropy continued to play a major role in American society. Many of the nation's leading philanthropists were motivated by their religious beliefs. For example, John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil, was a devout Baptist who gave away hundreds of millions of dollars to religious and educational causes. Andrew Carnegie, another wealthy industrialist, was a Presbyterian who donated large sums of money to build libraries and universities.

Religious philanthropy remains a significant force in American society today. According to a 2020 study by the Giving USA Foundation, religious organizations received \$122.94 billion in charitable donations in

2019. This accounted for 31% of all charitable giving in the United States.

Religious philanthropy has had a profound impact on American society. It has helped to build schools, hospitals, and other institutions that have benefited countless people. It has also played a major role in promoting social justice and equality. Religious philanthropy is a testament to the power of faith to inspire people to make a difference in the world.

This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.

Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.

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