A Legacy That Lasts For Centuries

As stated by one of our founding fathers back in 1776, Benjamin Franklin said, “If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.” There is an abundance of people living, but to be noticed by the public means doing something that catches the attention of many. Even though there are people out in the world who are doing good deeds everyday, only the most popular ones who create a noticeable legacy will be remembered. Authors create their legacy through their writing, and the public determines how much influence the writer will have. Authors who wrote excellent novels and caught the attention of the public will have more fame and remembrance and an eagerness from their readers to read more works they write. On the other hand, if the writing was not well-spread and eye-catching, then the public will not have the same want to remember the author and his works. Jack London is an example of an author whose works were constantly read by many when he was living, but they are also still read today. His novels are so extraordinary and impactful that he is still catching the attention of readers in the twenty-first century. The public is a key reason to if someone’s legacy will be remembered because of how they are the central target of attention. If you do something so meaningful, then your legacy will be known and sustained throughout time.

Jack London worked from such an early age to achieve success. According to Augustyn et al., he was born in San Francisco, California. His family was very poor, and he lived in poverty all of his childhood. At such a young age, all London wanted to do was explore the world. He was very independent and self-reliant. With his parents not paying any attention to him, he made his own decision to quit school at the age of fourteen. He started off at the San Francisco Bay, trying to make as much money as he could anyway possible. London next moved on to being a sailor in Japan and was able to travel around the world, something he has always wanted to do. Seeing some of the worst conditions people were living in and the poorest of the places are just two of things that he was able to see and relate to. He was even put into jail for vagrancy at one point because of how he was traveling homeless (Augustyn et al.). The way he first started off in life by struggling to even survive motivated him to make a life out of himself. London also aspired to learn from early on, just not in a school setting. He spent a great deal of time in libraries reading novels by some of the most classic authors such as Charles Darwin and Karl Marx, as said by Augustyn et al. He did try and complete college, but his college career did not last very long. He even completed four years of high school in one very fast year just so he could go to college, but he dropped out after one year because he thought he was better than his professors and that he would be able to learn more out of school. Without a degree and a reliable education, London found it hard to find a job. He needed to make a living and right around that time was the Klondike gold rush. The gold drove many people into the Yukon territory of Canada. It was risky, but London was jobless and was up for trying something new. He returned just as poor and was unable to find any kind of job worth his time (Augustyn et al.). By London not being the wealthiest and without a stable job was a main reason why he wanted to become a writer. He used his tough times as inspiration to never give up.

Jack London’s works spoke greatly, but his adventures also helped build his well-known name. According to Lou Leal, he was a fearless explorer and constantly took new risks. His wife, Charmian, and him went on an adventure called the Snark Voyage. London wanted to build his

own sailboat with any necessities he wanted and called his ship, “The Roamer” (Leal). He would only use the finest materials in construction, there was no “scrap pieces” allowed. His goal on the voyage was to see as many places as he could and experience new things (Leal). As said by Daniel Dyer, in a letter to the Cosmopolitan Magazine, Jack London wrote, “‘If the whim strikes us,’ Jack wrote, ‘we’ll go off to a thousand different and remote places that no tourist ever heard of’” in his “dream letter” he sent out (167). The expedition was so extraordinary and full of unique facts to write about. “Jack and Charmian were fearless explorers. They rode horses into the craters of volcanoes, sailed the ocean in a leaking boat, and tried just about everything they could in life” (Dyer 178). There was no end to their expedition. Their voyage was supposed to last a total of seven years, but it was cut short due to London's health problems. Even though the trip was shortened, London still got to see many parts of the world, and take new risks. He had an abundance of experiences to write about because of the trip (Dyer). His writing on the trip inspired a large amount of people to go do something out of the ordinary. This included the many people who read about his adventure and wanted to go on one also. He talks about how there is a whole different world out there willing to be seeken be interested people looking for something to do. His writing spoke out to the public.

Jack London is also known for the way he changed the value of the Sonoma Valley. He made a living on the gorgeous valley in California. London loved to follow his dreams, but when he knew he needed to settle down, he chose the Sonoma Valley because of how stunning it was. He wanted to find a quiet place where he could just sit down and write. The valley he bought was first owned by a group of winery operators including Charles Cowler, but when London took over he only kept some of the partialls of grapes (Leal). His main focus was on re-building the land and farming. On the valley, he and his wife constructed their dream house. The house, they called the “Wolf House,” was four stories high and Chairman and London filled it up with anything they could think of such as a room that could fit every single one of London’s works. The house burned down before they had a chance to make a living in it and he promised himself that he would rebuild it, but he died before he had a chance. What remains of the house and the attempt to rebuild it is still at the park to go visit. After London's death, his wife settled down into a home not far from where the wolf house was. She named it “The House of Happy Walls,” and it is now the museum at the Jack London State Park (Leal). It was a very costly house, so while he was tight on money after the huge amount that had just gone to waste, he focused on farming and improving the soil once again. Aside from writing, he had a passion for farming. Tyler LeBlanc mentions that Jack London once said, ¨‘I hope to do two things with the ranch: to leave the land better for my having been; and to enable thirty or forty families to live happily on ground that was once so impoverished (LeBlanc).’¨ Through London's time on the ranch, he brought back sustainable farming practices by not using any harmful chemicals. Instead of using artificial fertilizers, he used the manure of the animals he owned. London’s voyages enabled him to learn more about how to become a better farmer, such as how he analyzed the farming techniques of the Chinese and their plowing and drainage methods while visiting there to see what he could make work back in California. He also tried to keep the soil fresh by rotating the crops constantly (LeBlanc). London learned from his travels, and was one of the first people in California to be able to prevent erosion by terracing hillsides, and his method spread (Leal). His brilliant new ideas in the farming business helped to improve sustainable farming practices. He achieved his goal after all because the land is still so beautiful. Besides the farming, London also had an interest in animals. He had a passion for horses, so he would breed them and one of his even took first place at a state fair in California. He also owned a wide variety of pigs, and created what became known as a “pig palace” that was so strategically built it kept the pigs well taken care of by itself (Dyer 194). He would take

very good care of his animals and the land he acquired so the land would last and his farming practices would carry on. London is most known for his writing, but the way he was a sustainable farmer also plays into his well-known name and legacy he left behind. Due to his contributions on the valley, it is still a well-visited place today.

The biggest thing Jack London is remembered by is through his various novels. His writing was mostly about the adventures he experienced and the way he saw the world. According to Lou Leal, an expert on Jack London, he was a realist and after the Victorian era, most people were eager to read something about the real world. He wrote about truth and hidden dangers that sparked people's interests and reminded themselves of their own. He would write anywhere from a short story to a longer novel. His writing is still read today all across the country (Leal). One of the novels he wrote that was considered his most famous was the Call of the Wild. Mentioned by Kate Lohnes, he wrote this book based on his experience at the Klondike Gold Rush. In his novel, there is a household pet named Buck that is sold because of the high demand of sled dogs. The dog was cruelly treated, beaten, and forced to fend for himself against other dogs on the team of them. London wrote this novel to show that there was a high demand for the gold rush, but it came with lots of risks for harm. He depicts three key points that are naturalism, individualism, and social darwinism. He shows naturalism by the household pet that was sold and put put into the wilderness forced to try to survive, individualism by how Buck had to avoid getting killed by other dogs and surviving by himself, and social darwinism by how he killed the leader of the pack he was a part of so he could be the lead dog. The novel had such a strong meaning hidden behind the basic story of the dog Buck. It was a huge success and was read by the public all across the country. Today, in the twenty-first century, The Call of The Wild is still remembered as his “big break” and read by many (Lohnes). Another one of his writings that was very inspiring is his writing about his voyage. The Cruise of the Snark was written about how he built his boat, and the experiences he had on it while sailing in the Pacific Ocean. It was an inspiration to many and an interesting novel for anyone looking to read about how he saw the world (Buckwalter). London wrote about anything and everything, there was no limit to his imagination. He was known for his high multitude of novels and short stories.

Besides the writing and the farming, Jack London was a unique character. The public chooses to leave out parts of people’s lives that are unimportant in relation to the things they accomplished. He had trouble controlling his alcohol and would smoke more than he should considering his health issues. He was a social activist and would protest for rights. He was also very racist, and it is shown through his writing. His works were even too dramatic sometimes that libraries kept his novels and short stories out. His writing shows the reality and truth of the world. Afterall, he experienced living in the poorest conditions and worked his way up to making the most money out of any author during this time period (Leal). London also loved to spend his money, he would only buy the finest things with the best materials. He was not into using any scraps for any of his projects. After once living so poor, all he wanted to focus on was what should he buy next, and how could he make more money. Writing for more than half of the day with at least one thousand words, kept him on track getting more things published. Although this is the reality of how he was during the time of his existence, it is hidden behind the rest of his extraordinary life and publishes. His legacy is not remembered as being a trouble in society at all, but a creative human being, and just like any other person, the same applies. Everyone has flaws, but creating a legacy so great like London did outweighed his faults. The public determines what a person will be remembered by.

Sustaining someone’s legacy is achieved by the public. Jack London State Park is a beautiful

park located near Glen Ellen, California. The park is preserving London's legacy with the help of many volunteers and anyone else part of the team. The valley receives an abundance of visitors every year who can experience the beauty of it. There are tours and many events that are held each year as new things to do. Even just wanting a day away in nature can be achieved through a visit. There are even authors that are able to go and find a quiet place to write. The land he called, Beauty Ranch, is still preserving the life of Jack London because of all the volunteers and workers who put in the time and effort to keep the park clean and safe.

Jack London’s legacy is also sustained by him being such an inspiration to many. In the novel, Into The Wild, Jon Krakauer describes him as someone who influenced Chris Mccandless’s travel. According to Jon Krakauer, Mccandless carved, “Jack London is King” in a piece of wood next to where he died. Krakauer also chooses to include how one of Mccandless’s favorite authors was Jack London and in two of the epigrams at the start of the chapters there are quotes from two of London’s most famous novels, White Fang and The Call of The Wild. Chris Mccandless and Jack London are very similar. They both lived every day to the fullest and would try new things whenever they came up. London’s biggest goal in life was to see as much of the world as he could, and Mccandless followed in his footsteps doing the same (Jack London, Chris Mccandless, and The Wild). London’s works are so impactful that they show the deeper meaning of life. His legacy is enforced by how he was an inspiration to many and the mention of his name in other publishes.

The legacy of Jack London is still shown centuries later. The biggest way it is shown is still though his novels. People are able to connect to them and read about all of the adventures and different views he had on life. If his writing is not enough, there is also many groups that initiate activities and events that help to sustain how influential he still is such as the Jack London society and the Jack London foundation. Both of their main purposes are to keep him alive years later. The foundation is built upon the idea of educating the public sphere about the life and works of Jack London. Some of the contributions they have to encourage the importance of London consists of reading groups, seminars, and a writing contest open to all high schoolers across the country. The winner is always announced at the annual Jack London Birthday banquet that is also held each year to commemorate his works. The Jack London Society is a society that also shows the remarkable existence of London. They are able to do this by their creation of a magazine they publish that they add in insight and notes anywhere from London’s life to his writing for the public to read. Jack London’s legacy will not be forgotten because the way he built it up so interesting is enough to last a lifetime.

A legacy is created by what a person chooses to achieve through his/her life. It is up to the public to determine how much meaning their life will have and how their legacy will be kept alive. Ben Franklin’s legacy as being a member of the Founding Fathers contributing to the writing of the Constitution will be a historical figure known in the years to come. The Constitution is a well-respected document and is very important. Franklin’s legacy is remembered through a document he helped write. Right now, legacy is sustained through the use of technology. By the use of technology, the public is able to post information and news for it to get around. Through the public’s choice of continuous mention of people’s names, society is sustaining the legacy the person is creating or has already created. In the future, legacy will also be sustained by the public’s choice, but there may be different advancements in technology that contribute to the information of a person getting around. Experts on technology are creating new devices everyday that are being tested and put out into the public. An example is an Apple iphone, they are continuously releasing the newest up-to date devices with new accessories that anyone in

society who has access to them are purchasing. The greater speed and the newer advances technology will have will change how a person’s news will be put out into the sphere. New technology means a new way to sustain a legacy, but the creation of one is up to the person. Any human-being has a choice to either leave a legacy worth the time of the public or to go through life without meaning.