Franklin Gazette

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"Poverty wants some things, luxury many things, avarice all things." ~ *Poor Richard, 1735*

President's Message

by Ralph Gregory Elliot

There is a passage in David McCullough's admiring biography of John Adams that, without meaning to, illuminates a fact about Benjamin Franklin that was both obvious and rarely noted. Speaking of his courtship (pre-Abigail) of Josiah Quincy's daughter, McCullough writes of the 24-year-old Adams, "After an evening stroll with Hannah through Braintree — through 'Cupid's Grove' — Adams spent a long night and most of the next day with *Parson Wibird*, talking and reading aloud from Benjamin Franklin's *Reflections on Courtship and Marriage*."

This passage tellingly emphasizes a significant fact about Franklin: he was not only older than his fellow founders, he was old enough to be their father. His own son, William, was born in 1730, two years before George Washington, five years before Adams, and 13 years before Jefferson. (His second son, Francis Folger, was born in 1732, the year of Washington's birth.) By 1760, when Adams was sighing over Hannah, Franklin had established printing shops in a number of colonies, served (and retired) as Postmaster of Philadelphia for 16 years, helped found the American Philosophical Society, performed his famous electrical experiments and won the Royal Society's Copley Medal, been honored with Master's degrees by both Yale and Harvard, helped found the University of Pennsylvania, established the first public hospital, helped found Philadelphia's first fire company and the first circulating library in North America, invented the Franklin stove, led a militia company in defense of frontier settlers, served in the Pennsylvania legislature, published (and retired from publishing) Poor Richard's Almanac for 25 years, and written and published countless works on a wide variety of subjects.

While Adams in 1760 was struggling to start his law practice, Franklin had been abroad twice — first for two years from ages 18-20, living and working in London and then, beginning in 1757 for what would be (save for two years in Philadelphia) 18 years of service in London as the agent for Pennsylvania and other colonies, where he saw first-hand and participated in the evolution of feelings between mother country and colonies that led to the American Revolution.

Franklin's life experiences by the time he and Adams had to live in such close quarters in Paris in the late 1770's were thus longer in duration, and infinitely more varied, and informed by a more cosmopolitan exposure to the ways not only of humankind but also of the European courtiers and men of power than Washington, Adams and Jefferson could claim, Adams not having left American shores until his first voyage to Franklin's side in the late 1770's.

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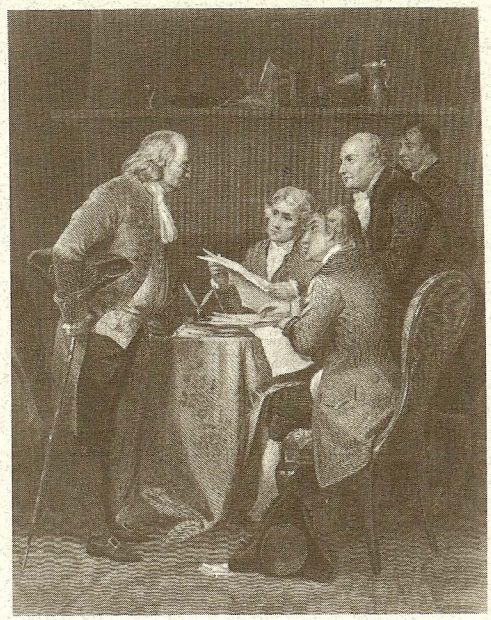

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P.O. Box 40048
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215-BEN-0300
(215-236-0300)
Fax: 215-440-3423
email:fof@benfranklin2006.org
Website:
www.benfranklin2006.org

Ralph Elliot, *President*

Alison M. Lewis, *Editor*
alewis4722@earthlink.net
215-727-7847

Claude-Anne Lopez,
Co-Editor

Newsletter Coordination:
Kathleen DeLuca
Roy Goodman

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President's Message

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The irritations and tensions between Adams and Franklin that famously arose in their French embassy together not only spring from such differences in traits and habits of mind as were caused by Adams's attention to the dotting of "i"s and the crossing of "t"s that are the natural lot of New England lawyers coming into collision with Franklin's more laid-back and calculated casualness when dealing with the French; or from the life lessons mastered by Franklin about the importance of timing, of letting things simmer, of the certainty that the other side would eventually come around when it felt the time was right, contrasted to Adams's more didactic and morally certain humorlessness when everyone did not instantly fall into line in the face of his logic.

They spring too, I think, from the inevitable and eternal jealousies and resentments of the generation gap between the two men — the ambitious and morally righteous Adams finally emerging on the world stage, only to find an old man apparently seduced in his dotage by the sybaritic pleasures of Babylon, lionized by tout le monde that mattered, leaving Adams in the shadow cast by Ben's imposing presence. It is the inevitable feeling of the young (Adams was 42) about the old — they are too old to cut the mustard, their mind has grown as soft as their habits, they haven't the energy, they're inattentive to important details, and they don't seem to appreciate the need for speed. No one today who has stayed in his job until age 60 or 65 can fail to see the impatience, often bordering on contempt, of the aspiring young who enter one's office and silently with their eyes measure the windows for drapes.

But part of the genius of Franklin, born of age, was the recognition of this generational issue and his ability — not without annoyance on occasion — to deal with it until Adams left for Holland, and Franklin could again be Franklin in peace, and work his will with Vergennes and the King at a pace comfortable for each.

News from The Franklin Papers: Franklin and Blackbeard

As a youngster of 12 or 13 Franklin composed ballads based on current events. Now Friends of Franklin can listen to his song, "Teach the Rover," or, "The Downfall of Piracy," written in 1718, and based on the newspaper account of the "desperate and bloody sea-fight between Lieutenant Maynard and that noted pirate Captain Teach, commonly called by the name of Black-Beard." Franklin printed the ballad and hawked it on the streets of Boston. As far as we know, this is the first time that his youthful ballad was ever recorded. The song is part of a brand new release, entitled PIRATE SONGS, by Mary Malloy and Stuart Frank, with Ellen Cohn and Robert Kotta (compact disk, $15, available through the Kendall Whaling Museum website (below), or by calling their gift shop [1-800-929-1133]). This is the companion compact disk to the book of the same name published by Stuart Frank in 1999, a unique compilation of pirate songs drawn from British, Irish, and American sources. Dr. Frank holds a Ph.D. from Brown University and is the Director of the Kendall Whaling Museum. The CD was produced by Grey Horse Productions, and sponsored by the Kendall Whaling Museum, which houses the world's foremost collection of scrimshaw and one of the finest general collections of artworks, artifacts, and manuscripts about whales and whaling (see their website for details: www.kwm.org).

Friends of Franklin will notice another tie to Franklin on the new CD: *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* Editor-in-Chief **Ellen Cohn**, a fine musician

cont.

and authority on both Franklin and music, is featured. In addition to her *a capella* solo, "Teach the Rover," she sings and accompanies herself on guitar on the traditional song "Captain Colstein," as well as singing harmony on the four-part "Captain Kidd." Those fortunate enough to have heard Ellen sing will remember her lovely voice and her skill in introducing the songs she performs. "Benjamin Franklin and Traditional Music," was Ellen's contribution to the 1990 conference on Franklin on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of his death, and Friends could read her paper (published in J.A. Leo Lemay's *Reappraising Benjamin Franklin: A Bicentennial Perspective* [Newark, Del., London, and Toronto: University of Delaware Press, 1993]), but until now have been unable to hear the songs as they would have been sung in Franklin's time. The first program sponsored by The Friends of the Franklin Papers was Ellen's performance of these songs, and members of that organization will remember that she set the standard for that group. The staff of the Franklin Papers have always joked about an "Ellen sings Franklin" CD. Now you too can enjoy Ellen singing one of Franklin's earliest original songs. But be warned, all record company moguls! You have to delay signing Ellen to a recording contract until all the volumes of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* are published!

Call for Papers: Conference on the History of the Lightning Rod

We would like to announce a conference on the history of lightning rods to be held November 4-6, 2002 at The Bakken Library and Museum in Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA). (The conference is timed to precede the History of Science Society conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 7-10, 2002, for the convenience of scholars travelling from outside the USA).

Although in general it is difficult to give the exact date of a scientific discovery or the invention of a technical device, it is sometimes possible to name an event that - at least in retrospect - is inseparably connected with such an achievement. One such event is certainly the demonstration of the electrical nature of lightning that took place in Marly near Paris on May 10, 1752, an event which is linked both to the development of the lightning rod as well as to Benjamin Franklin. This event provides the occasion to propose a conference on the history of the lightning rod. Our intent is not simply to commemorate the anniversary of a major technological achievement, but also to fill one of the desiderata in the history of science and technology. From our point of view, this device, its development and implications still await the comprehensive scholarly attention it deserves. With this in mind we intend to approach the subject matter from a wide variety of perspectives: namely history of science and technology, mentality and literature.

What were the symbolic and metaphorical uses of the lightning rod, e.g., in enlightened politics? The discussions on the prospective value (and danger) of this artificial device as well as its moral implications are paradigmatic for the discourse of the enlightenment. The commodification of the lightning rod, related economic aspects, its appearance in fire insurance policies as well as its use by the military are also of relevance.

We are further interested in different protection mechanisms against lightning, for example more traditional ones. We do not intend to solely focus on the second half of the eighteenth century, but would like to follow the developments in the 19th century and beyond. Of equal importance is a comparative element, which we hope to achieve by contrasting the introduction and uses of lightning rods in different countries and cultures.

We ask scholars from all fields interested in the topic to mail an abstract of their intended talk to oliver.hochadel@univie.ac.at and peter.heering@uni-oldenburg.de

Abstracts should be mailed to us not later than January 31st, 2002.

We hope that this conference topic will appeal to many scholars and we are looking forward to getting your responses.

-- Peter Heering (University of Oldenburg)
Oliver Hochadel (University of Vienna)
David Rhees (Bakken Library and Museum)

Busy Body by Benjamin Franklin or Benjamin Franklin Busybody?

Friend of Franklin Phyllis Seton recently sent us a clipping from the *New Haven Register* that describes a device commonly found on eighteenth-century houses in Philadelphia. The contraption is a set of three adjustable mirrors set in a metal frame, with two mirrors on the bottom and one on the top. It is intended to be mounted beside a window on the second or third story of a house, allowing the inhabitants to see who is at the door, or what is going on in the street without going downstairs and opening the door. This gadget, called a busybody, or tell tale mirror, is sometimes listed among Franklin's inventions. About 25 years ago a businessman from New Jersey named Roger Garrett began to sell a new version of this old favorite. He named it the "Benjamin Franklin Busybody" and it is still available by mail order for anyone who has a pressing need to keep track of

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From Warm to Very Warm to Icy to So-So: The Story of a Friendship Benjamin Franklin and William Strahan

Part III: Matchmaking?

by Claude-Anne Lopez

When, after twelve years of transatlantic correspondence, Franklin and Strahan finally met face to face in 1757, what had started as a business partnership soon bloomed into a warm personal friendship embracing Strahan's wife, their many children, and William Franklin, who had accompanied his father to London in order to study law. The dream of uniting their families had started long before, when the fond fathers began raising, albeit in a jocular manner, the idea of marrying Billy Strahan, then ten years old, to Sally Franklin who had just turned seven: "I am glad to hear so good a character of my son-in-law," wrote Franklin. "Please to acquaint him that his spouse grows finely, and will probably have an agreable person. That with the best natural disposition in the world, she discovers daily the seeds and tokens of industry, oeconomy, and in short, of every female virtue which her parents endeavor to cultivate for him; and if the success answers their fond wishes and expectations, she will, in the true sense of the word, be *worth* a great deal of money, and consequently a great fortune."

Not a very romantic portrait of the perfect wife, but it expresses exactly Franklin's views on the marital partnership. When talking with his Parisian friends some years after Debbie's death, he would tell them what a great helpmate she had been in their early years.

Matrimonial prospects were still being evoked five years later: "My compliments to your promising son, perhaps one day mine. God send our children, however, good and suitable matches; for I begin to feel a parent's cares in that respect, and fondly wishto see them well settled before I leave them." Billy Strahan, we are told, was a sturdy fellow, soon to be useful in the printing house. Franklin, still at a distance, kept an eye on him: "I am glad to hear that Billy likes the printing business. If, with the trade, you give him a good deal of reading and knowledge of books, and teach him to express himself well on all occasions in writing, it may be of very great advantage to him as a printer. ...My daughter is now eleven years old, grows finely, an honest good girl, as dutiful and sweet-tempered as one could wish..." In 1756, the Strahan boy is referred to by Franklin as "my son Billy," and is congratulated for his budding proficiency in business.

William Strahan was an impetuous man, used to obtaining what he wanted. Even though Franklin warned him that Deborah was deadly afraid of crossing the ocean, he felt confident that he could persuade her to bring Sally over for a visit now that Franklin's mission to England would take far longer than first believed. And so, on December 13, 1757, Strahan sent to Phildelphia a long, well thought-out letter, a real masterpiece of manipulation.

It starts off with a fervid encomium of Franklin, who, he says, turned out to be a still more extraordinary man than he had supposed. She, too, being the choice of such a man must also have wonderful qualities and feel immensely proud of him both as a husband and as a public figure.

After that cascade of compliments, a not-so-veiled danger signal:

"Now madam as I know the ladies here consider him in exactly the same light as I do, upon my word I think you should come over, with all convenient speed to look after your interest; not but that I think him as faithful to his Joan, as any man breathing; but who knows what repeated and strong temptation, may in time, and while he is at so great a distance from you, accomplish."

Now, wouldn't that put terror in every wife's soul?

Strahan then turns his attention to Sally:

"Besides, what a delightful expedition would this be to Miss Franklin, and how much must it amuse and improve her, to see and live a while in this great city!"

Strahan now addresses what he knows to be the great obstacle: Debbie's terror of the sea. He reassures her: "Truly this is more terrible in apprehension than in reality; of all the ways of travelling it is the easiest and most expeditious; and as for the danger, there has not a soul been lost between Philadelphia and this, in my memory..."

Following some praise for William Franklin ("the prettiest young gentleman I ever knew from America") and for what he has heard about Sally, he inserts a drop of venom in the last paragraph:

"Mr. F. has the good fortune to lodge with a very discreet good gentlewoman, who is particularly careful of him, who attended him during a very severe cold he was some time ago seized with, with an assiduity, concern, and tenderness, which perhaps only yourself could equal: so that I don't think you could have a better substitute till you come over..."

We shall never know whether this letter alarmed, saddened, or infuriated Deborah—or whether she merely ignored its innuendos. One month after Strahan had sent it, her husband let her know that he could foretell her

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In His Own Words: Young Franklin on Partisanship and Good Government

By Claude-Anne Lopez

In August, 1788, Franklin began to work on the continuation of his autobiography, commenced in 1771, but laid aside for a number of years. He intended to base his memoirs on papers he then found he had "lost in the war." Searching for the materials he needed, the revolutionary leader came upon some notes he had written at the age of 25, more than 50 years earlier: "*Observations* on my reading history, in Library, May 19th, 1731.

"That the great affairs of the world, the wars, revolutions, etc. are carried on and affected by parties.

"That the view of these parties is their present general interest, or what they take to be such.

"That the different views of these different parties occasion all confusion.

"That while a party is carrying on a general design, each man has his particular private interest in view.

"That as soon as a party has gain'd its general point, each member becomes intent upon his particular interest; which, thwarting others, breaks that party into divisions, and occasions more confusion.

"That few in public affairs act from a meer view of the good of their country, whatever they may pretend; and, tho' their actings bring real good to their country, yet men primarily considered that their own and their country's interest was united, and did not act from a principle of benevolence.

"That fewer still, in public affairs, act with a view to the good of mankind.

"There seems to me at present to be great occasion for raising a United Party for Virtue, by forming the virtuous and good men of all nations into a regular body, to be govern'd by suitable good and wise rules, which good and wise men may probably be more unanimous in their obedience to, than common people are to common laws.

"I at present think that whoever attempts this aright, and is well qualified, can not fail of pleasing God, and of meeting with success."

Hurrah for the idealism of youth!

Busybody *-- cont. from p.3*

what is going on outside or wants more Frankliniana in his or her life. The editors of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* can find no evidence that the great man ever laid claim to the busybody—and even if he did cobble together such a handy contraption, he probably wouldn't have insisted on his work being acknowledged. On Oct. 4, 1777, he wrote to his friend, Achille-Guillaume Lebègue de Presle, "I have no private interest in the Reception of my Inventions by the World, having never made nor proposed to make the least Profit by any of them." Apart from the question of whether or not this good citizen of Philadelphia was the inventor of the busybody, Friends of Franklin may suspect that the city's most distinguished resident might be quietly pleased to have his name attached to such a useful bit of hardware. In 1788 Franklin reflected on "the growing felicity of mankind...by the invention and acquisition of new and useful utensils and instruments...", and after all, didn't he sign some of his earliest essays "The Busy Body"?

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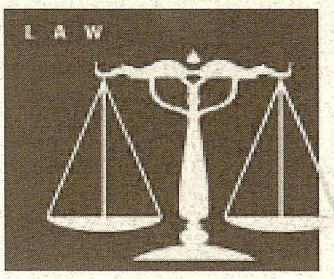

Correction

In the last issue of the Franklin Gazette, **Pamela Hartsock**'s e-mail address was inadvertantly left out of the article concerning the completion of her Ph.D. degree. For any Friends who would like to find out about obtaining a copy of Pamela's dissertation on the various editions of Franklin's *Autobiography*, please contact her at (619) 462-1515 or pnysvd_pnyernd@yahoo.com.

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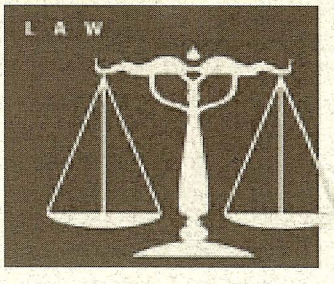

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Griffith Williams: Friend to Benjamin Franklin and Friend to American Liberty

By Sheldon S. Cohen
Professor, History Department
Loyola University, Chicago

The voluminous *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* include a wealth of communications sent him by a diverse and often notable array of individuals residing in locales outside of North America. From Great Britain, for example, Franklin's correspondence involved the distinguished scientist and theologian, Joseph Priestly; Richard Price, a noted non-conformist pastor, moral philosopher, and an ardent sympathizer with the American revolutionaries; Richard Oswald, merchant and Peace Commissioner at Paris, 1782-1783; and David Hartley, an amateur scientist and Member of Parliament. But aside from these influential Britons, some of whom had made their acquaintance with Franklin during his pre-Revolution residence in London, there were many other undistinguished British nationals who could claim ties in writing with the celebrated colonist. These common men from the "Mother Country" might appear irrelevant to historians. Nevertheless, clarifying the lives of such outwardly nondescript denizens of Great Britain can often broaden the scholar's perspective of the manifold exertions for the rebel cause exercised by individuals within that overtly hostile nation. Several of these unappreciated, though easily traceable Britons, have received recent scholarly attention, but the matter of locating a low-profile, shadowy Welshman named Griffith Williams proved a more painstaking, though ultimately rewarding search.

Griffith Williams, bearer of a name common in eighteenth-century Wales, dispatched only three extant letters to Benjamin Franklin, all of them during the latter part of 1778, a time when his recipient was one of the American Commissioners in Paris. Williams' letters, appearing in volumes XXVII and XXVIII of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, mentioned such matters as increased public disillusionment in Britain over the war in America, the writer's own attachment to the rebel cause, his concern about captive colonial seamen incarcerated in the British Isles, and his observations on existing dislocations in that nation's commercial trade – especially the fisheries. But perhaps most intriguing was an enclosure in his letter of 24 August 1778, in effect a memorial or memorandum entitled, "Friends to American Liberty are Friends to Mankind." The title was in Williams' handwriting, and in the document, he identifies himself solely as a "surgeon" from Wapping. Forty other men, mostly British, though some were American expatriates living in London, also signed the enclosure. It is presently held by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. But neither this repository nor the current curators at the Papers of Benjamin Franklin at the Yale University Library have particulars concerning the birth, career, and death of this Griffith Williams.

Who then was this obscure Welshman, and how did he prove himself a friend to Benjamin Franklin and to "American Liberty?" In searching for these answers, the author was able to obtain the valued assistance and consideration of several sources within the United Kingdom. Chief among these British benefactors was Mr. Gervase Belfield, a professional researcher. In addition to his skilled and valuable efforts, support was also provided by officials at the Royal College of Surgeons, the Society of Apothecaries, the Guildhall Library, the Society of Genealogists, the Dyfed Family History Society in Wales, the National Library of Wales, and the Portsmouth City Museums and Records Service. Within the United States, facts and clues were provided by the Newberry Library, Yale University Library, the Loyola University Library, and the very useful, though not perfect, International Genealogical Index.

There is strong evidence that our Griffith Williams was christened on 24 March 1741, several days after his actual, unlisted birth in the hamlet of Llanelly, Carmarthenshire, Wales. His father was recorded as William Griffith so that in accordance with the Welsh patronymic naming custom, he adopted his father's Christian name as his surname. Other details, including his mother's name or siblings were not listed at this time. There is also no citing of his father's occupation, although most of this rustic Welsh county was then given over to agriculture and livestock production. Griffith evidently attained a basic level of schooling – a fact reflected in his erudite letters later sent to Paris. The reasons that he left his picturesque birthplace for other locales are not specifically revealed, but the existing vicissitudes of the agrarian market and the negative features of land enclosures on smaller farmers may have constituted motives. One other possible factor could be the general widespread migration by individuals and families from outlying areas of the realm during the early and mid-eighteenth century to the burgeoning and beckoning metropolis of London. The city then seemed to offer new opportunities as a result of rapidly expanding foreign trade.

Whatever were the actual motivations for Williams' attraction to the city, documents reveal that the transplanted Welshman had become a resident of the British capital by the early 1760s. There, the parish register of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe, City of London, certified that on 21 August 1765, "Griffith Williams batchelor [sic.] of the parish of St. Anne Blackfryers [Blackfriars], and Ann Hubbuck, spinster, of the parish aforesaid married after calling of the banns on 4, 11, & 18 Aug. 1765." St. Andrew's Anglican church, where both Ann and Griffith were evidently communicants, was then the parish place of worship for the Society of Apothecaries.

Subsequently, the Williams couple moved to

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Franklin & Strahan -- *cont. from p.4*

reaction: "He [Strahan] has offered to lay me a considerable wager, that a letter he has wrote to you will bring you immediately over hither; but I tell him I will not pick his pocket; for I am sure there is no inducement strong enough to prevail with you to cross the seas."

Considering he had wanted this marriage for so long, Franklin's attitude is strangely passive. Behind all this talk of fear of the sea, there may have lurked a never mentioned deeper anxiety: that of the provincial afraid of looking ignorant and backward in the big city. He had adapted quickly but Deborah may well have felt that not only would she lose her friends and relatives but that she might prove an embarrassment to her husband now moving in much more sophisticated circles, as she could tell by the kind of household goods he was sending over.

Strahan made a last attempt two years later when he presented what was clearly a formal proposal for their children's marriage and for the permanent settlement of the Franklin family in England. This time Franklin pointed out to his wife the advantages of such an offer: he described the Strahan family as amiable, very well-to-do, and young Billy as "sober, ingenious, illustrious, and a desirable person." Franklin held out little hope to his friend because of his affection for Pennsylvania and his wife's aversion to crossing the sea, and left the final decision to Debbie. His letter to her on the matter said, "I gave him no expectation that I would forward the letters [containing the proposal]. So you are at liberty to answer or not, as you think proper. Let me, however, know your sentiments. You need not deliver the letter to Sally, if you do not think it proper."

Sally, then sixteen and a half, was never consulted, it seems.

We all know about Franklin's triumphs as a statesman, diplomat, scientist, etc. , but when it came to matchmaking, he was a total failure. Sally did not marry Billy Strahan. William did not marry Polly Stevenson, his father's choice. Temple was turned down by Cunégonde Brillon's parents. And Benny Bache did not marry Polly's daughter, Elizabeth Hewson. Snatching the lightning from the heavens and the scepter from tyrants was one thing, but guiding a child's destiny was quite another.

Franklin in Japan – Comes to Philadelphia!

Friends of Franklin life members James Hayase and Genya Asama from Japan paid a visit to the United States last spring, and the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia became one of their destinations. Friends of Franklin board member Roy Goodman and *Franklin Gazette* editor Alison Lewis, both employed at the APS, welcomed the Japanese visitors to the library where they were treated to a tour of Franklin's learned society and shown some of the Franklin-related "treasures" of the library collections. Friends of Franklin executive secretary Kathy DeLuca crossed over the Delaware River from New Jersey and joined the group for lunch.

One of the reasons for the pair's trip to the U.S. was to visit Japanese-American Franklin descendant Yukiko Irwin in New York City. Mr. Hayase first became personally acquainted with Ms. Irwin in 1998 on a previous trip to the United States. He had read Ms. Irwin's book on Franklin, which was published in Japan, and he wished to meet this descendant of the man whom he had admired so much since reading the *Autobiography* in high school. Ms. Irwin is currently working on a revised and updated version of her book, to be published in English.

Back home in Tokyo, Mr. Hayase is employed by Accenture, an information technology company. He is also president of One Associates, a firm which does executive training. Mr. Asama is also involved as an advisor at One Associates. Mr. Hayase credits Franklin with much of the inspiration behind the motivational trainings he provides to Japanese executives. He has always admired Franklin for his pragmatism and feels that this is a very useful concept for bringing about corporate change. Executives taking his trainings are also provided with life management tools based on the 13 virtues outlined in Franklin's *Autobiography*. Mr. Hayase seems to be a gifted teacher; he mentioned his insight that the deepest form of learning and change takes place when learners feel, as well as understand, what they are hearing.

Returning to the APS, the group was joined by Friends of Franklin board member Ralph Archbold for a "photo op" in the library's main reading room. American Friends were honored to have been paid this visit, and were encouraged to learn that the seeds of Franklin's ideals are finding fertile soil in Japan.

Griffith Williams -- *cont. from p.7*

nearby Wapping. It was a small district of the capital adjoining the City of London on the east and on the north bank of the Thames. Wapping was then a densely populated district, highlighted by many docks and peopled primarily by maritime workers, transient seamen, humble tradesmen, unskilled laborers, indigents, miscreants, and a diverse group of others comprising the bottom levels of London's social classes. [It was in Wapping that the notorious Judge George Jeffreys was arrested following the Glorious Revolution, and where the feared pirate Captain William Kidd met his end on its Execution Dock in 1701.] The district was noted during the latter half of the eighteenth century for its plenitude of public houses frequented by lower class prostitutes and the prevalence of a growing number of near-destitute Africans and Irishmen herded into unwholesome riverside slums. Earlier, in 1725, this section marked the birthplace of John Newton, the reformed slave trader who composed the inspirational hymn, "Amazing Grace."

It was also in this predominantly disreputable, misery-plagued district that Griffith Williams first appeared on the parish tax records in 1768 where he was recorded as residing on High Street. His name was also included in land tax assessments for the community and his occupation entered as an apothecary. The members of his family were also registered at this time as communicants in the parish church of St. John, founded in 1694. The rector of this stately edifice was Dr. Francis Willis, who, unlike most of his Anglican colleagues, had received his doctorate in medicine and not theology. [Years later, Willis was referred to as the "Mad Doctor" for his controversial treatment of King George III following the monarch's initial mental breakdown in late 1788. It was Dr. Willis who officiated at St. John's Church during the births of four sons to Ann and Griffith between November 1777 and April 1781. A daughter Mary had preceded the boys, but she died only a month after her birth in June 1768. As for Griffith Williams, his own death was entered in the parish register for 29 March 1792.

Concerning the matter of Griffith Williams' actual occupation during his residence in Wapping, British repositories consistently cite his profession only as an apothecary. Most particularly, he is given this title in the exhaustive compilation of P.J. and R.V. Wallis, *Eighteenth Century Medics: Subscriptions, Licenses and Apprentices.* Ms. Tina Craig, Deputy Librarian at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, notes that Griffith Williams was never licensed as either a physician or a surgeon. Moreover, Ms. Dee Cook, Archivist at the Society of Apothecaries also in London, states that Williams "did not appear to have been examined or recognized by the Society of Apothecaries." She added, however, that although such appointments and examinations procedures ordinarily occurred after a seven-year apprenticeship term, in Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many practitioners "slipped through the net." Support for this assertion is found in Penelope Hunting's book, *A History of the Society of Apothecaries.* In it she notes that in 1748, when Parliament failed to grant the society control over 'druggist and chemists," half of the approximately 700 of these practitioners in the London area were not members of the Society. It was not until 1815 that the British government would finally adopt legislation aimed at reforming this profession.

In view of such indications, it was quite possible that Griffith Williams' actual training for his profession was limited, and since official supervision was imperfect in his overcrowded and underclass parish, this self-styled apothecary might well have engaged in the actual practice of medicine itself. Other contemporaries, including the noted Edward Jenner, did so during this period. And it should be further recognized that the title of surgeon in the late eighteenth century still did not carry the same prestige level linked to university educated physicians. Nonetheless, compared to apothecaries, many surgeons were often ranked higher on the professional "pecking order." Perhaps then, this explains the reason for Williams identifying himself as a surgeon on the interesting document sent to the American Commissioners. More likely perhaps, it was taken from the combined "surgeon-apothecary" designation employed in tiny, distant communities in Britain's countryside.

The affairs of eighteenth century London apothecaries, which seemed to have been Williams' principal occupation, can generally be sketched out. A great number of men – and to a lesser extent women – practiced this age-old profession with the overcrowded metropolis whose population had swelled to about 800,000 by 1780. In serving such an often-ailing populace the apothecaries, or "druggists" of this period, dealt with broad and varied products then considered medicinals. They included commodities such as balsams, liniments, smelling salts, mineral and treacle water, dressings, gargles, and emetics. They also dispensed popular patent medicines such as ointments, "Scots pills," cream of tartar, volatile and fixed oils, gums, resins, and a multitude of placebos, tonics, and elixirs. Since health care was so inadequate in an underprivileged district such as Wapping, it was easily understandable that its resident apothecaries like Griffith Williams were probably obliged to furnish medical advice and additional personal care for their clients.

The matter of Griffith Williams' declared adherence to the American struggle for freedom and his contributions to that cause are clearer, although his exact motivations are not. Perhaps his impulses may have been induced by the emergent resentment in Wales to the increasing power of absentee English landowners. They may also have been influenced by the radical political precepts of the previously mentioned Richard Price, a fellow Welshman. Regardless of the stimuli, his writings to Benjamin Franklin emphatically reveal his opposition to

cont. on p.10

Some Personal "Notes" on Travel and the Armonica

By Cecilia Brauer

I recently returned from a four week tour of Japan with the Metropolitan Opera. I have been an associate member of the Orchestra for over 29 years where I play the celeste , and when on tour, the piano. This is my seventh tour with the Met, the second to Japan.

While there, a Piano/Armonica concert was arranged for me in Yokohama by Mikio Kozuka, also an Armonicist. The concert was recorded by NHK-TV,one of Japan's foremost television stations and broadcast on the news which was aired all over Japan and Asia.

In Tokyo, I had the pleasure of meeting with two "Friends of Franklin", James Hayase and Noriyuki Uenami. At dinner we enjoyed a wonderful conversation about our mutual friend, "Ben Franklin" and Mr. Hayase graciously accepted my request to be my interpreter at the concert in Yokohama.

Upon my return from Japan, I presented the Armonica at the National PBS-TV Convention, held in Philadelphia. It was sponsored by TPT-TV and Middlemarch Productions, producers of the "Liberty" series. This was a promotional for their upcoming mini-series "Benjamin Franklin", The Life and Times of an American Genius, to be aired in the Fall of 2002.

In the latter part of June, Dean Shostak, of Old Williamsburgh, and I were featured on History Channel's new series, "The Most" in an episode about Franklin's Armonica titled "On That Note".

In March of 2000, I was the presenter in "Franklin's Armonica" on History Channel's "Lost and Found" series which has been rerun several times and is being re-aired on Friday, September 28 at 12 noon and 6pm.

My CD on the Armonica, *The Angelic Sounds of Christmas* is now promoted by The Musical Heritage Society and can be purchased through them or my website: www.gigmasters.com/armonica/

Good Reads: Reviews of Franklin Related Books

Benjamin Franklin by Martha E. H. Rustad. Mankato, MN: Pebble Books, 2002. 24 p. Hardback, $10.95. ISBN: 0-7368-0995-3. Part of Capstone Books' series of First Biographies, this is a picturebook aimed at early readers and pre-readers. Highly simplified and colorfully illustrated, this book provides a timeline introducing the bare bones of Franklin's biography to young people. Also included are a word list, an index, and listings of print and internet resources for those who'd like to learn more.

Benjamin Franklin: l'Américain des Lumières by Claude Fohlen. Paris: Payot, 2000. 404 p. 145.00 French francs. ISBN: 2228893560. Part of the Biographie Payot series, this is a new biography of Franklin written from a French perspective for French readers. Although your humble editor's French is not good enough to have sat down and devoured all four hundred pages of this tome, she suspects that this book is a "must have" for Francophone Franklinophiles or any Friend who strives to collect everything written on the good doctor. No word yet on any possible English-language translations

We encourage Friends of Franklin to remember to support our organization by purchasing their books through the Amazon.com link on our website (www.benfranklin2006.org). You can find book reviews from previous issues of the *Gazette* on the website as well. Every book you want to buy, Franklin-related or not, can directly benefit the Friends of Franklin by using this simple, secure ordering method.

"Think Tank" on Franklin

The May 24th edition of PBS's "Think Tank" program, hosted by Ben Wattenberg, focused on the topic "Was Benjamin Franklin the First American?" Guests were **H.W. Brands**, professor of history at Texas A&M University and author of *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*; **Claude-Anne Lopez**, former editor of the Benjamin Franklin Papers at Yale University and author of *My Life with Benjamin Franklin*; and **Ormond Seavey**, professor of English at the George Washington University and author of *Becoming Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and the Life.* If you missed the show, a complete transcript is available on-line at www.pbs.org/thinktank/show_956.html.

More on Y-Chromosomes

L. David Roper
(roperld@vt.edu)

In my recent article in the *Franklin Gazette*, I said that one could extract Benjamin Franklin's Y-chromosome from one of his hairs. I was mistaken; that only works for mitochondria DNA, which is used to determine maternal genetic lines. A better way would be to locate two Franklin males who are known to be related to Benjamin; they would have the same Y-chromosome as Benjamin. Although Franklin's direct male heirs died out after a few generations, the chromosome theory should work for a man related to a close male relative of Ben's – one of his brothers or paternal uncles, for example.I have initiated a project to determine the Y-chromosome pattern for as many Franklin males aspossible, to see which ones are closely related (i.e. within about 20 generations). Any Franklin male interested in participating should contact me. I am, of course, especially interested in those Franklin males who are known to be related to Benjamin. Contact L. David Roper at 1001 Aubrun Dr. SW, Blacksbury, VA 24060-8123 or call 540-951-7047 (9AM to 9PM only.)

Griffith Williams -- *cont. from p.8*

the Royal government's wartime policies, and he declared to the American Commissioners that similar sentiments were on the rise among the British populace. Williams also reported on persistent wartime dislocations, particularly in Britain's commercial sector, and this significant factor, noted by others in Europe, was relayed to the Continental Congress. And Williams' intimate sympathies to the rebel cause in America were probably best exhibited in another personal manner: in April 1779 he named a newborn son Gideon Washington Williams.

But it was in the realm of direct, often hazardous, and certainly illegal actions that Griffith Williams provide perhaps his most beneficial services on behalf of the American rebels. During the contest for independence some three thousand Yankees, mostly captured seamen, were incarcerated in several detention centers within the British Isles. The greatest single number were held in two particular gaols – Mill, situated in Devon between Plymouth and Devonport; and Forton, about one mile outside of Gosport in Hampshire. From their openings in spring 1777, many of the daring interned rebels were able to effect successful breakouts, most frequently from the less secure Forton Gaol. Afterwards, a number of the escapees, those able to avert recapture, with local assistance made their way to London, less than eighty miles distant. There, in some ways similar to the "underground railroad," they received temporary sanctuary from pro-American sympathizers who were willing to conceal them. Too long hiding in one place could prove precarious, especially with suspicious neighbors and the notorious press gangs then prowling the city. The object of the fugitives was to somehow obtain passage to the European mainland and eventually reach Paris. Aware of the American Commissioners in the French capital, it was perceived that their countrymen there could serve as the means to return home. Actually effecting that goal was the predicament for these Yankee runaways.

It was here that the apothecary proved a main catalyst in accomplishing the fugitives' objectives. His decade-long residence in Wapping had familiarized him with several hiding places, escape routes, and ship loadings. Living close to the docks and acquainted with many seamen and maritime workers, Griffith Williams was cognizant of ships departing for the continent as well as the security surrounding these vessels. Consequently, with the assistance of London sympathizers, and quite likely some well-placed bribes distributed to dock watchers or sailing masters, many of the escaped rebels were surreptitiously taken aboard passenger or commercial vessels that subsequently took them to freedom.

Possibly another element abetting the intrigues surrounding the flight of these American fugitives from England could be found in the memorial with forty-one names that Griffith Williams included in his letter to Benjamin Franklin dated 24 August 1778. The signatures on that list noticeably included two ship pilots from the small channel port of Deal in Kent. Such trained seamen may also have played a role in the hazardous flight of the Yankee escapees. Ms. Sarah Quail, local historian and head of the Portsmouth City Museums and Records Service in Hampshire, has written the author that in the hands of such experience pilots, the vessels holding the fugitives "could probably do a run to France and back within 24 hours with a fair wind." And fair winds to France no doubt proved the welcome climax to their goal. Several of the former prisoners did in fact receive financial and other assistance in Paris from Benjamin Franklin. A number of escapees even rejoined the American cause after their return to North America. Recalling their risky flight, they all certainly had reason for gratitude to the several individuals in Britain who had made their homecoming possible, including Griffith Williams.

The American Declaration of Independence contains the following remarks: "Nor have we been wanting in our attention to our British brethren.... They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity." If then the drafters of this time-honored document were referring, as seems likely, solely to the existing Royal government they were pretty much correct. But if they meant the British populace as a whole, their assertions need qualification. In fact, there were many men residing within the British Isles who spoke out or wrote strongly in support to the American insurgents, and even some who were willing to take active, extra-legal measures of behalf of these rebels. Griffith Williams, of whom there is admittedly much more to uncover, was obviously one such individual.

Today, Griffith Williams, "Friend to American Liberty" and friend of Benjamin Franklin, has been neglected by scholars in comparison to the aforementioned more notable Britons who also lent support – though usually with less risk – to the American cause. Williams' otherwise ordinary life and career has no doubt been a factor in his subsequent neglect by historians. Recently, however, Claude Lopez, a longtime Franklin scholar, has produced a masterful work, *My Life with Benjamin Franklin*, citing several little known Frenchmen who also had limited connection with the famed Philadelphia. Similarly, this modest portrayal of Griffith Williams will offer a modicum of credit to this unsung Welsh apothecary and provide some of the recognition that he clearly deserves.

[Ed.'s note: If you are interested in obtaining a list of the sources Professor Cohen used in researching this article, please contact the editor.]

Special Thanks to Our Life Members!

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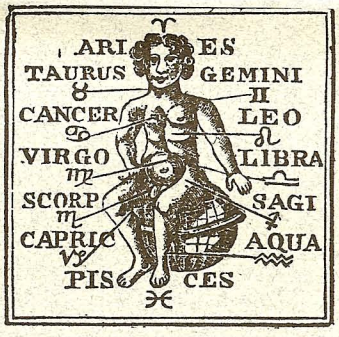

Calendar of Events

January 17, 2002. Save the date! Parade and luncheon in honor of Franklin's birthday and the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Philadelphia Contributorship. In Philadelphia. Contact Carol Smith at CSmith@contributorship.com for more information.

November 7-10, 2002. Conference on the History of the Lightning Rod, to be held at the Bakken Library and Museum in Minneapolis. See call for papers on p. 3 for more information.

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