

Franklin Gazette

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"The doors of wisdom are never shut." Poor Richard, August, 1755

President's Message

By Ralph Gregory Elliot

At this writing, Walter Isaacson's book, *Benjamin Franklin*, is No. 2 on *The New York Times Bestseller List*, sandwiched between Hepburn and Hillary. Who ever would have thunk it? To be sure, the book is fluidly written, accessible and eminently readable; and Isaacson, like Zelig, appears to be everywhere, promoting the book. But still and all, *Franklin*? Just in recent years we've had books by Lopez, Brands, Srodes and Morgan on the man, with harbingers of works by Wood and Schiff in the offing and a generous essay by Bernard Bailyn. How large and hungry is the audience for Frankliniana anyway?

Apparently, larger and more voracious than dedicated Franklinistas think. Why is this so? There are an almost infinite number of reasons, for the range of his interests was so vast that inevitably he did, wrote or said something that will appeal to every taste, calling or interest. Students of government, science, diplomacy, private enterprise, journalism, belles letters and good works all will find an abundant trove of contributions in the life of this man. Franklin is also the most human, the most contemporary, the most flesh-and-blood of the Founders. And, as Barbara Oberg, quondam Editor of the Franklin Papers and now Editor of the Jefferson Papers remarked in an interview in *The Princeton Packet*, "I think he is approachable, in part, because of his humble origins, in part because he can laugh at himself. I can't see Washington and Jefferson laughing about themselves." (His example as a pseudonymous satirist, Silence Dogood, was even recently

invoked in a Doonesbury strip as inspiration to an adolescent blogger named Zipper, nephew of Zonker Harris.)

For those of you who cannot wait for the next book about Franklin, it may be time to renew acquaintance (or make acquaintance for the first time) with his *Autobiography*. Yale University Press has just issued a superb new paperback edition of the work, with a foreword by Edmund Morgan and helpful annotations by the Editors of the Benjamin Franklin Papers. Sometimes I think that the *Autobiography* is the most praised unread book on American life, that much like Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, everybody means to read it but has never quite gotten around to it. Now, between Isaacson's book and the imminent publication of Gordon Wood's, you, gentle reader, have a window of opportunity to repair to the one and only, the original, the real thing. And for those who have read other editions of it, you will find that the annotations help one immeasurably to

understand context, relationships and a host of other arcana that inevitably appear.

The Friends, meanwhile, continue to explore unique ways to contribute to honoring the great man. Elsewhere in these pages you will read of our latest venture. We have searched the nation for schools named for Franklin (hoping, but uncertain, that we found them all) and formally designated each one a Benjamin Franklin Birthday Partner and Tercentennial Site. Working through the schools' librarians, we hope to awaken an interest in Franklin among students and teach-



Portrait of Franklin by Charles Amedée Philippe VanLoo.
Courtesy of The American Philosophical Society.

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President's Message *cont. from p. 1*

ers alike, and to use the occasion of his 300th birthday to get people to appreciate his continuing relevance to our times. By designating the school a tercentennial site, with significant accompanying media publicity, we hope to inspire the townspeople to use the facility to commemorate Ben's life and works. We have located some 150 such schools. If, reviewing the list, you find we missed one, do let me or Kathy DeLuca know the particulars, and we shall remedy the matter.

This unanticipated and therefore unbudgeted project would not have been possible without the generous assistance of our friends at the American Philosophical Society and, importantly, the generosity of those of you who contributed to our second Annual Fund appeal. If we are to play the meaningful role the Friends ought to play in celebrating the life of Franklin, we require these

periodic financial infusions, for we have no significant source of income other than annual dues, and accordingly run a rather lean operation. My personal thanks to all of you who stepped forward.

Finally, a word of sad adieu to two of our founding mothers who have chosen to retire from the Board. Claude Lopez and Deane Sherman were present at the creation of the Friends in 1988, and for 15 years have labored in its vineyards with ceaseless toil, an abundance of good cheer, and meaningful and insightful contributions to a cause they clearly loved. While they have ceased as of June to be officially involved in the organization, we have their assurance that they will remain available for advice, encouragement and warning - much like Bagehot's Queen Victoria - and that prospect is a boon for which the Friends remain eternally grateful.



Benjamin Franklin Schools Join Friends in Birthday Partnership

In August 2003 the Friends of Franklin launched a new initiative when they invited all public schools in the United States named in honor of Benjamin Franklin to join with them as 300th birthday partners and official tercentennial sites. A copy of the *Chronology* of Franklin's life accompanied an official certificate. The Friends hope this new program will awaken new interest in Franklin and his achievements. It is also hoped that this will encourage the school and its community to become a center for celebratory events and exhibits commemorating Franklin's life as the 300th anniversary draws closer. Anyone who knows of a public school named in honor not listed here is encouraged to contact Kathy DeLuca or Ralph Elliot so that an invitation might be extended to that school as well.

Arizona

Franklin Elem. School, Mesa, AZ

California

Franklin Elem. School, Elk Grove, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Alameda, CA
Franklin Avenue Elem. School, Los Angeles, CA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Glendale, CA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Riverside, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Altadena, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Redlands, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Bakersfield, CA
Franklin Elem. School, San Jose, CA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Santa Ana, CA

Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Anaheim, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Oakland, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Yuba City, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Modesto, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Santa Monica, CA
B. Franklin Elem. School, Santa Ana, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Santa Barbara, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Burlingame, CA
Franklin Elem. School, Merced, CA
Franklin Elem. School, San Diego, CA
Franklin High School, Stockton, CA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Whittier, CA
Benjamin Franklin Middle School, San Francisco, CA

A Franklin Papers Anniversary

by Ellen Cohn

Fifty years ago this fall, all the elements needed to create the Franklin Papers editorial project fell into place. Henry R. Luce, in response to an appeal by Yale president A. Whitney Griswold, pledged that Time, Inc., would launch the project with a gift of \$400,000, on behalf of *Life* Magazine. With the funding secured, Yale President A. Whitney Griswold approached Justice Owen J.

Roberts, president of the American Philosophical Society. They agreed to a joint sponsorship of the project, with the Society pledging additional funds. Leonard W. Labaree and Whitfield J. Bell were selected to be the Editor and Assistant Editor, and the editorial offices were established in Yale's Sterling Library. The project was officially announced to the public on the 248th

anniversary of Franklin's birth, January 17, 1954.

As documentary editors, we glory in bringing to life the personal side of events as told through the pens of the participants. We offer, from our project files, the following exchange of letters between Labaree and Luce, both sons of missionaries, who first met as boys at the Hotchkiss School in Connecticut.

November 27, 1953
Mr. Henry R. Luce,
Time, Inc.,
New York City

Dear Harry:

For many months I have wanted to write you a personal note to tell you how splendid your action, and that of your associates, has been in proposing to finance the editorial costs of a definitive edition of Benjamin Franklin. In the light of two recent events I feel I must now tell you what a fine and public-spirited thing it is that you have done.

These events are, first, the final conclusion of an agreement between Yale and the American Philosophical Society for the joint sponsorship of the edition and, second, their invitation to me to become editor-in-chief of the projected volumes.

In accepting this assignment I am aware that I am taking on a big responsibility: to American historical scholarship in general, to the two sponsoring institutions in particular, and even more particularly to you and the Time-Life organization who have made this great undertaking possible. I shall do my best not to let any of you down. I may add, too, that I am looking forward with real pleasure to establishing a warmly cooperative relation with some of your staff people. I shall do all I can in the editorial office here to make available to your people whatever Franklin materials they may find useful to them.

There is perhaps a special appropriateness in my writing you the day after Thanksgiving. Do you remember, by any chance, your Thanksgiving of 1912? The day before, a missionary's young son recently back from China rode down from Lakeville on the old Central New England Railway with a missionary's son from Persia to spend the holiday with the latter's family in New Britain. You and I were both "new boys" at Hotchkiss (though you were a Prep and I was a Low Middler) and it was our first break from the strict discipline both the faculty and the Seniors imposed upon us. I remember feeling pretty cheerful about getting away. Both of us would probably have been rather astonished if we could have known then that forty-one years later we should be renewing our connection in this very different manner. To me, and I hope to you, it is a very happy circumstance.

Cordially,
LEN
Leonard W. Labaree

January 9th, 1954

Dear Len:

It was nearly a month ago that I got back from Rome and found your most interesting and cordial letter waiting for me. I can hardly believe that I have let so much time go by before telling you how very glad I was to have it. But it's almost harder to believe that 41 years have gone by since Thanksgiving in New Britain.

Happily the 41 years need no explanation or are beyond it. There they are -- or were. And whatever may be said against them, I, for one, am both awed and pleased that they were weaving all the time a pattern which would result in our collaboration now in such a splendid project.

I am returning to Rome soon again, will be back briefly in March, and then probably for a longer spell in early summer. Sometime in June or thereabouts, I hope we can have a personal reunion.

Meanwhile let me say again how delighted I am that you are undertaking the Benjamin Franklin work, and let me thank you once again for your letter.

Sincerely yours,
HARRY
Henry R. Luce

Dr. Leonard W. Labaree,
1319 Yale Station,
New Haven, Connecticut

Syng of Philadelphia, Franklin's Friend

Few people could have claimed a longer friendship with Benjamin Franklin than silversmith Philip Syng Jr., 1703-1789. Having returned to Philadelphia from London one month apart as young men in 1726, shortly thereafter Philip had the honor of a membership in Franklin's Junto. With Franklin, Syng play a vital role in the founding of the Library Company of Philadelphia, Union Fire Company, The Philadelphia Contributionship Insurance Company, The American Philosophical Society, the College and Academy from

which the University of Pennsylvania evolved and the Associators which the Pennsylvania National Guard claims as its origin. Philip Syng also participated with Thomas Hopkinson, Ebenezer Kinnersly and Benjamin Franklin in the famous 'Philadelphia Experiments', and created the patterns for Franklin's first "Pennsylvania Fireplace". Remaining friends until passing away eleven months apart, today Franklin and Syng rest a short distance from each other in the Christ Church Burial Ground.

This year marks the Tercentenary of

Philadelphia silversmith, Philip Syng Jr., who in 1752 crafted the inkstand later used by Benjamin Franklin and others in the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. It is today the symbol of the National Independence Historical Park. Under the auspices of the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, Syng's 300th birthday is being celebrated this Sept. 27-28th with a number of events and restoration projects. This Tercentenary will also include a gathering in

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At the Dawn of Science, Part II

by Claude-Anne Lopez

And now, for the collaboration with a Frenchman: one of Franklin's first initiatives after arriving in Paris at the very end of 1776 to seek help for the floundering American Revolution was to attend a meeting of the Académie Royale des Sciences of which he had been made a foreign associate some years previously. And there, of course, he met the cream of the European scientific intelligentsia, of which Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, in his mid-thirties, was one of the most prestigious members. There soon came an invitation to a dinner at the Lavoisiers, to be followed by a replication of some of Joseph Priestley's experiments on the various kinds of air. Thus began between Franklin and Lavoisier a close friendship that would result in fruitful moments of collaboration. Lavoisier's wife, Marie-Anne, who had married him when she was fourteen, was not only an accomplished hostess and a pretty woman, but a partner in the lab, as shown by the portrait of the couple painted by David, which now hangs at Rockefeller University in New York.

When Franklin agreed to advise a committee seeking the best way to reconstruct the powder magazine of the Arsenal in order to make it safe from lightning, Lavoisier exclaimed: "Every moment of your life is given to the enlightenment and the happiness of your fellow-men. Posterity must hear that in the midst of political turmoil, as the great Franklin was setting in motion the powers of the world, he still found time to ensure the peace of mind of the Parisians by building an accident-proof powder magazine!" Lavoisier's enthusiasm was surely heart-felt since he both lived and ran his lab in that very Arsenal.

What made this relationship particularly precious to Franklin was that Lavoisier was a French farmer general, a title that had nothing to do with farming. The farm was a syndicate of financiers responsible for collecting taxes on certain goods and for administering the state monopolies of salt and tobacco. Lavoisier's father-in-law headed the tobacco division and tried hard, in the early days, to finance the war effort of the colonies by importing American tobacco, but the deal fell victim to legal technicalities. Lavoisier himself was *régisseur des poudres*, in charge of explosive powders including the indispensable saltpeter—and this was to prove the payoff for Franklin's help with the Arsenal. (Lavoisier was also the close friend of Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours who eventually emigrated to America with his son Eleuthère-Irénée, the founder of the E.I. Dupont Company.)

And so it was that when, in 1779, Congress sent Franklin a gigantic shopping list for military equipment, Lavoisier performed bureaucratic marvels to cut through the red tape and get bags of saltpeter shipped to the coast and loaded on a ship called the Marquis de Lafayette—alas, to be promptly captured by the British, and be replaced with further effort.

Protecting the Parisians from an explosion of gunpowder

was high tech, to be sure, but science in its early days was so diffuse, so all-encompassing, that two eminent scientists like Franklin and Lavoisier did not think it unworthy of their competence to tackle such a humble problem as the growing of potatoes.

The potato had, of course, been known in Europe since the sixteenth century, when it had been brought back, along with gold, from Peru; but, although it had gained acceptance in Germany, Switzerland, and especially in Ireland, the French peasantry stolidly maintained it was a source of leprosy. Its champion turned out to be a modest pharmacist by the name of Antoine Parmentier, who had been introduced firsthand to its virtues while in a prisoners' camp in Germany. Back in France, he devoted his life to the potato's cause, well aware that every wheat crop failure brought untold hunger and suffering to the population. Since any change of fashion had to start with the King, Louis XVI was talked into granting a few acres of land to Parmentier and he then went as far as to wear in his buttonhole a sprig of potato flowers from the first crop. In spite of some initial giggling at Court, the nobility soon followed suit and in November 1778 a grand dinner was given, with Franklin in attendance, to launch Parmentier's potato bread which turned out to be, in the words of a journalist, "as beautiful, as fluffy, as white as the best rolls." (Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, XI-XII, 155). Franklin and Lavoisier attended another banquet, and this time each course consisted only of potatoes, prepared in various ways, and washed down with potato spirits (vodka, I would guess?). Pretty soon, potatoes were being stolen from Parmentier's experimental fields, and the battle was won.

One month before that banquet, Franklin had received a gift of potato bread—"without as much as an atom of flour in it"—from a convert to Parmentier's crusade, and, like him a pharmacist. Antoine-Alexis Cadet de Vaux, in his mid-thirties, had founded a daily newspaper, the *Journal de Paris*, a year earlier. He directed it until the Revolution and campaigned in its columns for better hygiene in prisons and hospitals, while starting a bakery school to propagate new techniques. How could Franklin resist such a project, he who had not only designed the Philadelphia Fireplace, now known as the Franklin stove, but also a new oven about which his wife informed him that, on her first try, it had produced a batch of delicious muffins. Cadet de Vaux eventually became a celebrated chemist.

After peace had been signed with England in 1783 and gunpowder was no longer needed, Franklin and Lavoisier found themselves collaborating on a project of a more spiritual nature, one that went to the very core of the Enlightenment. It had to do with the perennial tug of war between rationality pure and simple and the vague world of the mystic, the unexplainable. It was an official inquiry into mesmerism.

In the year 1784, the population of Paris watched with

mounting excitement as the two most celebrated foreigners in their midst confronted each other in a debate that pitted medicine—wrapped in this case in a mystical cloak—against the cool principles of the *Encyclopédie*, and this at a time when people were getting somewhat tired of reason. On one side stood Franz Anton Mesmer, the genius from Vienna, the apostle of magnetic fluid as a cure for all diseases—or was he really a charlatan? On the other side was Benjamin Franklin, the great inventor, the propagandist for smallpox inoculation—or was he at this late stage too fixed in his views to accept new ways?

Paris was becoming the mecca of the marvelous with its wonderful, invisible forces: Newton's gravity, Franklin's electricity, the miraculous gases of the balloons that lifted men into the air. Mesmer's séances became increasingly popular. He would gather thirty persons around a covered oak tub about one foot high, filled with powdered glass and iron filings. The lid was pierced with holes through which passed iron branches, to be held by the patients who were sitting in a circle, bound together by a cord. Then Mesmer, wearing a coat of lilac silk and carrying a long iron wand, slowly walked around the crowd. Sometimes he would sit opposite a patient, foot against foot, knee against knee and provoke a trance-like state—the germ of hypnotism, as it is believed by some.

Admired by Lafayette, patronized by Queen Marie-Antoinette, a Viennese herself, Mesmer became such a celebrity that the King appointed two commissions to examine the veracity of his claims. One of those commissions consisted of four prominent doctors, including Dr. Guillotin; the other was composed of five members of the Academy of Sciences, including Franklin and Lavoisier. They had a jolly time conducting a variety of experiments in the garden of Franklin's residence, mesmerising each other, a tree, and a horse, the result of which, one might say, was to put an end to Mesmer's career. The final report, written by Lavoisier, reveals his awe at the power of one man's charisma to unleash the enthusiasm of thousands of others. For us who have known Hitler and Stalin this needs no elaboration, but for the members of the Enlightenment it was an overpowering discovery.: "One man commands," wrote Lavoisier, "and the others are only his instruments...Man has the capacity to act on his peers, to shake their nervous systems to the point of convulsions, without the use of any magnetic fluid. This is a dangerous phenomenon."

Finally, after Franklin's return to Philadelphia, there came Lavoisier's last message to him, brought from Paris by a common friend. The "father of chemistry," now in his late forties and at the summit of his career, is sending two copies of his latest book, one for Franklin, the other for the American Philosophical Society. It is, he explains, an elementary treatise of chemistry founded on a new principle. No longer does it start from a pre-conceived hypothesis justified by abstract

reasoning, but it is based on experiments and observation. This, he says, is a revolutionary approach only partially adopted by his colleagues. Franklin's endorsement would certainly ensure its success.

From this potential revolution in scientific thinking, Lavoisier turns to the political revolution taking place in France. His letter was written on February 2nd 1790, seven months after the fall of the Bastille, at a time when the Revolution had not yet lost its way. Lavoisier has just been appointed head of a commission to secure the uniformity of weights and measures that would lead to the establishment of the metric system, his long-sought goal, and yet...And yet, one senses a note of deep foreboding. While stressing that there is not the slightest possibility of France's going back to the old order, Lavoisier explains that his country is now divided between a weaker aristocratic party and a stronger democratic one, more appealing to most intellectuals. But, he adds, the moderates worry about the situation getting out of hand now that weapons have been distributed to the urban population. "How we regret at this point that you are so far away!" he exclaims. "You would have been our guide and you would have shown us where to stop." We don't know whether Franklin was still alive when this letter arrived. What I hear in it is an appeal for help, from a boy to his father.

Lavoisier had good reason to feel anguished. Hadn't he belonged to that group of tax collectors who were universally hated whether or not they had been personally corrupt? Indeed, two years later, he was ordered to leave both his apartment and his lab at the Arsenal. And two years after that, during the Reign of Terror, he was sent to the scaffold along with the other 27 farmers general—after a trial that had lasted less than a morning. He was the third to be executed, his father-in-law the fourth. To a person who said that such a genius as Lavoisier should be allowed to live, one of the prosecutors allegedly thundered that "the Republic had no need of scientists."

Had he still been alive in 1794, Franklin would have been infuriated by such a pronouncement. In his view, there was nothing worthier nor more beautiful than scientific discovery, as he wrote to Jan Ingenhousz, a pioneering investigator of photosynthesis, who was about to engage in a quarrel with Joseph Priestley: "I hope you will omit the polemic piece in your French edition and take no public notice of the improper behaviour of your friend, but go on with your own excellent experiments, produce facts, improve science, and do good to mankind. Reputation will follow and the little injustices of contemporary labourers will be forgotten... You can always employ your time better than in polemics." (I. Bernard Cohen, *Benjamin Franklin's Science*, 105).

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Benjamin Franklin Schools Join Friends in Birthday Partnership

Benjamin Franklin Jr High School, Daly City, CA
Ben Franklin Elem. School, Corona, CA

Colorado

Ben Franklin Elem., Littleton, CO
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Pueblo, CO
Franklin Elem., Centennial, CO 80121

Connecticut

Franklin Elem. School, Stratford, CT
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Meriden, CT
Franklin Elem. School, Franklin, CT
Benjamin Franklin School, Norwalk, CT

Florida

Ben Franklin Elem. School, Miami, FL

Idaho

Franklin Junior High School, Pocatello, ID

Illinois

Franklin Jr Sr High School, Franklin, IL
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Park Ridge, IL
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, East Chicago, IL
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Moline, IL
Franklin Center High School, Franklin Grove, IL

Indiana

Franklin Central High School, Indianapolis, IN
Benjamin Franklin Jr High School, Valparaiso, IN
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Terre Haute, IN
Franklin Community High School, Franklin, IN
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Gary, IN
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Whiting, IN

Kentucky

Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Louisville, KY

Louisiana

Benjamin Franklin Senior High School, New Orleans, LA

Massachusetts

Franklin High School, Franklin, MA
Franklin Elem. School, North Andover, MA
Franklin Elem. School, West Newton, MA
Franklin Elem. School, Brockton, MA
Franklin Avenue Elem. School, Westfield, MA
Franklin Elem. School, Wakefield, MA
Franklin Elem. School, Medford, MA

Maryland

Franklin Elem. School, Reisterstown, MD
Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Baltimore, MD
Franklin High School, Reisterstown, MD

Michigan

Franklin High School, Livonia, MI
Franklin Elem. School, Cadillac, MI
Franklin Elem. School, Grand Rapids, MI
Franklin Elem. School, Royal Oak, MI

Franklin Elem. School, Pontiac, MI
Franklin Elem. School, Ludington, MI
Franklin Elem. School, Escanaba, MI
Franklin Elem. School, Battle Creek, MI

Minnesota

Franklin Elem. School, Rochester, MN
Franklin Elem. School, Anoka, MN
Franklin Elem. School, Mankato, MN
Franklin Elem. School, Eveleth, MN

North Carolina

Franklin High School, Franklin, NC

North Dakota

Ben Franklin Elem. School, Grand Forks, ND
Ben Franklin Jr High School, Fargo, ND

New Hampshire

Franklin Jr Sr High School, Franklin, NH

New Jersey

Franklin Elem. School, Bloomfield, NJ
Ben Franklin Elem. School #13, Elizabeth, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Union, NJ
Ben Franklin Elem. School, Pennsauken, NJ
Ben Franklin Middle School, Teaneck, NJ
Ben Franklin Jr High School, Ridgewood, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Pennsauken, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, East Orange, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Trenton, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, East Rutherford, NJ
Franklin High School, Somerset, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Lyndhurst, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Franklin, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Saddlebrook, NJ
Ben Franklin Elem. School, Edison, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Kearney, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Bergenfield, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Westfield, NJ
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Lawrenceville, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Summit, NJ
Franklin Elem. School Number 3, North Bergen, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, South Plainfield, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Newark, NJ
Franklin Elem. School, Succasunna, NJ

New York

Franklin Elem. School, Hewlett, NY
Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Buffalo, NY
Franklin Central Elem. School, Franklin, NY
Ben Franklin Elem. School, Buffalo, NY
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Binghamton, NY
Franklin Avenue Elem. School, Pearl River, NY
Franklin Elem. School, Brooklyn, NY
Franklin Elem. School, Hempstead, NY
Franklin Elem. School, Lackawanna, NY
B Franklin Jr Sr High School, Rochester, NY
Franklin Academy High School, Malone, NY

Ohio

Ben Franklin Elem. School, Newark, OH
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Findlay, OH
Franklin Elem., Archbold, OH
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Cleveland, OH
Franklin Heights High School, Columbus, OH
Franklin High School, Franklin, OH

Oklahoma

Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Hugo, OK

Oregon

Franklin High School, Portland, OR

Pennsylvania

Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Indiana, PA
Benjamin Franklin High School, Philadelphia, PA
Franklin Elem. School, Vanderbilt, PA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Philadelphia, PA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Uniontown, PA
Benjamin Franklin Jr High School, New Castle, PA
Franklin Elem. School, Northampton, PA
Ben Franklin Elem. School, Harrisburg, PA
Franklin Elem. School, Lehigh, PA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Bethel Park, PA
Franklin Elem. School, Pottstown, PA
Franklin Elem. School, Sewickley, PA

Texas

Ben Franklin School, Wichita Falls, TX
Franklin Elem. School, San Antonio, TX
Franklin Elem. School, Hillsboro, TX
Franklin Elem. School, Gainesville, TX
Franklin Elem. School, Houston, TX
Franklin Elem. School, Alamo, TX
Franklin Elem. School, Port Arthur, TX

Virginia

Ben Franklin Jr. High School, Chantilly, VA

Washington

Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Kirkland, WA
Benjamin Franklin Elem. School, Vancouver, WA

Wisconsin

Ben Franklin Elem. School, Franklin, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Fond Du Lac, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Madison, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Rice Lake, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Manitowoc, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Milwaukee, WI
Ben Franklin Jr. High School, Stevens Point, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Appleton, WI
Ben Franklin Elem. School, Menomonee Falls, WI
Ben Franklin Primary School, Franklin, WI
Franklin Elem. School, Milwaukee, WI

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Syng of Philadelphia, Franklin's Friend

Philadelphia of families from across the country that are descended from Philip and Elizabeth Syng.

Public recognition of Syng's contributions to the city of Philadelphia will include two public events. The first being the dedication of a Pennsylvania Historical Marker at the site of Syng's workshop on Front Street September 28th at 1:30 p.m. Happily, Philip's tercentenary has also coincided with the opening of the Christ Church Burial Ground to the general public. Although the Syng family had intended to install a reproduction headstone at Philip's gravesite, the recent discovery of Syng's original marker with previously unknown inscriptions for his wife

Elizabeth and reference to eleven of their children interred with them altered the plan. This historic stone has been raised, cleaned, and reset, and will be the site of a public "Rededication and Renewal Service" at 3:00 p.m. on Sept. 28th. Finally, this year, a gift by a family member of the original eighteenth century silhouette of Syng, his only known image from life, has been given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A campaign to sponsor restoration and display of this frail artifact was undertaken. With the generous support of the Syng family, this work will be completed in time for his birthday celebration.

The finale of the 'Syng 300 Celebration' events will be the annual

Garden Party sponsored by the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks at the home of Syng's grandson, Dr. Philip Syng Physick, on South Fourth street. Philip Syng Jr. had been the executor of Benjamin Franklin's original will of 1750, and coincidentally, Henry Hill, who built what is now commonly known as the Physick House, was the primary executor of Franklin's final will.

For more information about Philip Syng and his tercentenary, you may visit the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary web site: www.benfranklin300.com, and The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks web site: www.philalandmarks.org.

The "PHILADELPHIA" ELECTRIC EXPERIMENTS

of Benjamin Franklin, Philip Syng Jr., Thomas Hopkinson and Ebenezer Kinnersley

1743

In May 1743, while visiting Boston, Benjamin Franklin attends a lecture by Dr. Archibald, which included a demonstration of the new science of electricity. The lecture "surpriz'd and pleas'd" Franklin although he later realized that the experiments had been imperfectly performed.

1744

In April 1744, Franklin publishes, in his *Pennsylvania Gazette*, an advertisement for a lecture in Philadelphia by Dr. Spencer, a noted naturalist of the time. Despite Franklin's exposure to these demonstrations of electrical curiosities, there is no record that he was inclined to carry on his own experiments.

1746

Peter Collinson, The Philadelphia Library Company's agent in London, sends Franklin, Syng, Hopkinson, and Kinnersley an account of German electrical discoveries as published in *London's Gentleman's Magazine*, and a glass tube that produces electricity by rubbing it with silk or skin. Franklin later writes: "I eagerly seized the Opportunity of repeating what I had seen at Boston, and by much Practice acquired great Readiness in performing those also which we had an Account of from England, adding a Number of new Ones. I say much Practice, for my House was continually full for some time, with People who came to see these new Wonders. To divide a little this Incumbrance among my Friends, I caused a Number of similar Tubes to be blown at our Glass-house, with which they (Thomas Hopkinson, Philip Syng Jr. and Ebenezer Kinnersley) furnish'd themselves, so that we had at length several Performers."

1747

March 28, 1747, in a letter to Peter Collinson, Franklin writes: "Your Kind present of an electric tube, with direction for using it, has put several of us on making electrical experiments..."

July 11, 1747, in a letter to Peter Collinson, Franklin reports that Philip Syng had invented an electrical machine, consisting of a sphere revolving on an axis with a handle, which was better adapted for producing electrical spark than the tube rubbing practiced in Europe. He also notes that Thomas Hopkinson had observed the power of points to throw off electricity, and that he, Franklin, had discovered and described positive and negative charges.

1749

In April 1749, Franklin reports to Peter Collinson of "what we called an Electrical Battery," plus a "self moving wheel," a primitive electric motor with cardboard windmill-type vanes made by Philip Syng.

November 7, 1749, writing in his journal, Franklin suggests an experiment to test the hypothesis that lightning was electricity. Franklin suggests that lightning or electricity could be drawn from the air during a storm by means of a rod of iron shaped like a needle at the summit of a tall building. He noted, "Let the experiment be made."

1751

Between 1748 and 1750, a number of Franklin's letters to Peter Collinson had been read at meetings of the Royal Society in London. In 1751 these letters are published in London under the title *Experiments and Observations on Electricity, made at Philadelphia in America*. However, in England, this publication had generated little scientific enthusiasm for the efforts of Franklin and his colleagues in Philadelphia.

1752

France Embraces the Importance of the Electrical Experiments

Finding a more receptive audience in France, a copy of Franklin's book came into the hands of the naturalist the Comte de Buffon, the keeper of the Jardin du Roi. He advised Thomas-Francois d'Alibard to do a translation which was published in early 1752. The Philadelphia experiments, published in Paris as *Experiences et Observations sur l'Electricité faites à Philadelphie en Amerique*, excited scientists and the French public.

February 3, 1752, at the chateau of The Duc d'Ayen in St. Germain, King Louis XV saw the Philadelphia experiments performed by Monsieur de Lor, who, with Buffon and d'Alibard, was determined to carry out Franklin's greater experiment of drawing lightning from the sky.

May 10, 1752, in a garden at the royal château of Marly, outside of Paris, d'Alibard set up an iron rod, an inch wide and forty feet long, pointed with brass, mounted on a square plank insulated from the ground by three wine bottles. That afternoon there was a single clap of thunder followed by hail. Sparks were then drawn off the rod, accompanied by a crackling sound. Although the French experiment preceded Franklin's by a few weeks, he had no knowledge of it and assumed that his own experiment was the first.

In June 1752, presumably waiting for the construction of a steeple on Christ Church in Philadelphia, Franklin has the idea of sending up a kite during a thunderstorm. Fearing ridicule if unsuccessful, accompanied only by his son William, Franklin went out into the countryside with a kite. According to legend perpetrated by Philip Syng Jr., this kite was equipped with a pointed wire to draw the lightning and a metal key at the base of the string. With the kite aloft in the rain, Franklin was able to draw sparks from the key.

In France, d'Alibard gave Franklin all the glory for conceiving the experiment and Louis XV ordered that the wizard of Philadelphia be sent his compliments and thanks. Peter Collinson subsequently passed on the message from the grateful King. In a letter Collinson wrote, "If any of thy Friends . . . should take Notice that thy Head is held a little higher up than formerly, let them know; when the Grand Monarch of France strictly commands the Abbe Mazeas to write a Letter in the politest Terms to the Royal Society, to return the King's Thanks and Compliments in an express Manner to Mr. Franklin of Pennsylvania for the useful Discoveries in Electricity, and Application of the pointed Rods to prevent the terrible Effects of Thunder-storms, I say, after all this, is not some Allowance to be made, if the Chest is a little Elevated?..."

1886

In Ford's *A list of Books Written By, or Relating to Benjamin Franklin*, he says, "These, ('Philadelphia'), experiments and discoveries, which have given Franklin such fame, were the work of four men: Benjamin Franklin, Philip Syng Jr., Thomas Hopkinson and Ebenezer Kinnersley; but owing to Franklin writing of them to England, they were published in his name, and have redounded to his credit solely".



Franklin on France

With the current strains in diplomatic relations with France, one wonders if the two cultures appeared so irreconcilably at odds when Franklin lived in France. On his second trip to that nation (1776-1785) he came to know it well, and he made many friends there. He never did become accustomed to some things: "For sixty years now, masculine and feminine things—and I am not talking about modes and tenses—have been giving me a lot of trouble. I used to hope that at the age of 80 I would be free of all that. But here I am, four times 20, which is mighty close to 80, and those French feminines are still bothering me. It will make me all the happier to go to Paradise where, they say, all such distinctions will be abolished." Any student of the French language will groan in agreement with this excuse for not writing more often: "You have accepted with such good grace my poorly written Epistles that I make bold to send you one I drafted two weeks ago but did not finish because I did not have the time to look up all those masculines and feminines in the Dictionary, nor the modes and tenses in the Grammar." (He composed the letter in French, and wrote masculine in the feminine form, and feminine in the masculine form!)

Franklin defended the French character: "I think the French have no national Vice ascrib'd to them. They have some Frivolities, but they are harmless. To dress their Heads so that a Hat cannot be put on them, and then wear their Hats under their Arms, and to fill their Noses with Tobacco, may be called Follies, perhaps, but they are not Vices. They are only the effects of the tyranny of Custom. In short, there is nothing wanting in the Character of a Frenchman, that belongs to that of an agreeable and worthy Man."

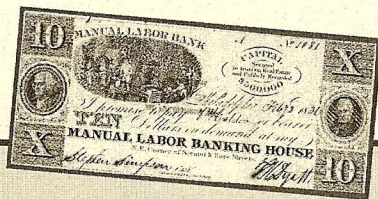
Many, too many, approached him about emigrating to America: "Many, I believe, go to America with very little, and with such romantic schemes & expectations as must end in disappointment & poverty. I dissuade all I can, those who have not some useful trade or art by which they may get a living.—But there are many who hope for Offices and public employments, who value themselves and expect to be valued by us, for their birth or quality, tho' I tell them those things bear no

price in our markets. But fools will ruin themselves their own way."

The French nation, however, was unequivocally besotted with the American plenipotentiary. On July 27, 1783, he wrote to his daughter and son-in-law, "I still continue to be as esteem'd and belov'd by this amiable Nation, and have probably much more Respect shown than I should have at home; yet I long to be there before I die..." He echoed the same sentiments of homesickness intermixed with a genuine admiration of the French in a letter of the next day, "The French are an amiable People to live with: they love me and I love them, Yet I do not feel myself at home, and I wish to die in my own country." Lest you think that this was just the fleeting impulse of a man far from home, here is what he wrote to John Adams four years after his return to Philadelphia: "For my part if I could sit down to Dinner on a Piece of [Connecticut's] excellent Salt Pork and Pumpkin, I would not give a Farthing for all the Luxuries in Paris." Long after Franklin's death Adams wrote of Franklin's impact on the French. Although Adams could never be numbered among Franklin's admirers, even he admitted, "His name was familiar to government and people, to kings, courtiers, nobility, clergy, and philosophers, as well as plebeians, to such a degree that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a valet de chambre, coachman or footman, a lady's chambermaid or a scullion in the kitchen who was not familiar with it and who did not consider him a friend to human kind... When they spoke of him, they seemed to think that he was to restore the golden age... His plans and his example were to abolish monarchy, aristocracy, and hierarchy throughout the world."



FRANKLIN TIDBITS



Franklin: The New Action Hero?

Accoutrements, a firm based in Seattle Washington, has added Benjamin Franklin (with kite in hand) to its lineup of unusual action figures which includes Moses, Rosie the Riveter, and Sigmund Freud among others. Soon to join them are Albert Einstein, Cleopatra, Pope Innocent III, William Shakespeare, as well as a librarian, frequently an unsung hero. See the company's website: www.accoutrements.com/actionfigures for more information.



Franklin Goes Commercial:

"To Err is Human; Fresh Breath, Divine"

"To Err is Human; Fresh Breath, Divine" appears to be the sentiment of Benjamin Franklin even as he paraphrases Alexander Pope. Franklin is portrayed in a new print advertisement by toothpaste manufacturer, Mentadent, which appeared with the coupon supplements in Sunday newspapers.

Armonica Music Accompanies Bottled Water Advertisement:

Could Franklin have imagined the popularity of bottled water? Certainly those plastic bottles would not have inspired his invention of the armonica. However bottled water supplier, Aqua Fina, is now airing a new commercial featuring three Japanese men playing wineglasses. "By the Light of the Silvery Moon," played by Cecilia Brauer on the armonica provides the accompaniment in the background.

Federal Reserve Bank's New Exhibit

"Match your wits with Ben," to test what you've learned at the Federal Reserve Bank's new exhibit *Money in Motion*. The exhibit using state of the art technology tells the story of currency and the Federal Reserve's role in monitoring the nation's money supply. Counterfeit bills, shredded money and rare colonial coins are all featured in this fun exhibit in the lobby of the Federal Reserve Bank across from the new Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

Currency \$10 Note; Manual Labor Banking House, Philadelphia, PA 1836 with bust of Franklin after Martin. Courtesy of The American Philosophical Society.

Good Reads: New Edition of the Autobiography

Yale University Press's new edition of the *Autobiography* has been hailed as "The best and most beautiful edition [of the *Autobiography*]."—J. H. Plumb, *New York Review of Books*. Newly reissued with a forward by Edmund Morgan, an introduction by the late Leonard W. Labaree and an editorial note by Editor-in-Chief Ellen R. Cohn, this edition contains biographical notes, bibliography and a chronology of his life. For further information see the Yale University Press web site: www.yale.edu/yup/.

U.S. News Honors Franklin

Jay Tolson published an engaging article on Franklin, "The Many Faces of Ben Franklin in *U.S. News and World Report's* June 23, 2003 issue. For those who missed it, it can be ordered from the US News and World Report web site: www.usnews.com/usnews/biz/e_friend.php3?goto=%2Fusnews%2Fissue%2F030623%2Fmisc%2F23ben.htm.

Fond Friendships, Yes; Libido, Babes, and Black Book, No!

It was an honor to be asked to contribute a piece to the special issue of *Time* magazine consecrated to Franklin, and I was thrilled at the thought of appearing in its columns along with a Pulitzer prize winner (Stacy Schiff) and the author of the current best-seller on Franklin (Walter Isaacson).

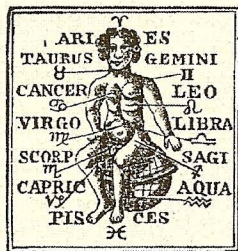
"Franklin and Women" was the topic chosen for me, one I have addressed with great pleasure in my previous writings. The relationships I described there—be they with his female relatives, American or English women or the women of Paris—were always based on emotional and intellectual exchanges. My information was **always** derived from written documents. The purely sexual encounters, however numerous and ubiquitous they might have been—those legends that feed the popular American image of Franklin as an indefatigable womanizer, have always left me indifferent, not because I am a prude but because, as a documentary editor for so many years, I need a solid source for what I write. In this case there is none.

I was prepared to see my piece shortened, as indeed it was, but dismayed to find it presented in the titillating fashion that I have so consistently avoided. Never did I compare Franklin to Lothario nor allude to a "black book" which does not exist.

Sex sells, we know that. But honestly, now, in those pre-Viagra days should one expect all that libido from a man pushing eighty, suffering from gout plus a kidney stone, even if he was a Founding Father?

I'm not about to make a big fuss over this but I wanted the Friends of Franklin to know.

CLAUDE-ANNE LOPEZ



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ongoing-February 2006

Exhibit at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, "Only One Man Died: Medical Adventures on the Lewis and Clark Trail." Exhibit explores the medical aspects of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Meriwether Lewis carefully planned the trip consulting with doctors in Philadelphia to learn critical medical skills he would need on for the expedition and purchasing medical supplies, scientific equipment and provisions.

Upcoming

"The Atlantic Economy in the Era of Eighteenth-Century Revolutions," Conference of the Program in Early American Economy and Society, The Library Company of Philadelphia. Call (215) 546-3181 for more information, or visit the Library Company's website, www.librarycompany.org.

September 20, 2003

10th annual Public Lands Day, Washington, D.C. "Benjamin Franklin," several of his descendants, a Fife and Drum Corps, members of Congress and school children will take part in a sunrise procession to Signers Island (named in honor of Declaration of Independence signers), one of the sites slated for clean-up in this day of volunteer care for public lands in the Washington, D.C. area. For more information go to www.npld.com, or contact Robb Hampton at (202) 261-6462.

September 28, 2003

300th anniversary celebration of Philip Syng. Unveiling of a new state historic marker for Syng's workshop on Front Street, "Rededication and Renewal Service" for his newly uncovered headstone at Christ Church grave yard and other events.

October 11, 2003

Visit the home of Franklin's long-time friend John Bartram and tour the city from the river. Historic Bartram's Garden is hosting the last of its river cruises in conjunction with up the Schuylkill to the Fairmount Waterworks and back on Saturday, October 11, the commemoration of the 275th anniversary of the purchase of property by John Bartram in 1728. Tickets are \$15 apiece; call 215.729.5281 for more information.

October 30 – November 1, 2003

Friends' tour to Annapolis, Maryland. See "Benjamin Franklin and Annapolis" article for more information.

January 16, 2004

Celebration! Benjamin Franklin, Founder festivities including seminar, luncheon and procession to Franklin's grave. Details will follow.

October 6, 2005

Benjamin Franklin Consortium Exhibit opens in Philadelphia at the Franklin Institute.

"Benjamin Franklin and Annapolis"

"America's Sailing Capital" will be the location of the Friends' annual expedition to yet another Franklin haunt. Friends will arrive in Annapolis, Maryland on Thursday, October 30th at the Governor Calvert House, one of three historic inns of Annapolis. Our tour will begin at 1:00p.m., concluding on Saturday, November 1st.

So, mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. The tour brochure is being mailed to all Friends where complete details are revealed. Call Kathy DeLuca at 856-979-1613 if you need further details or would like extra copies of the brochure.

In Memoriam

Well-known Franklin scholar **I. Bernard Cohen** died on June 20, 2003. Cohen, who was the Victor S. Thomas Professor of the History of Science Emeritus at Harvard University, was a pioneer in the field of the history of science. In 1941 he produced a new edition of *Franklin's Experiments and Observations in Electricity which evolved into his PhD dissertation, Franklin and Newton, An Inquiry into Speculative Newtownian Experimental Science and Franklin's Work in Electricity as an Example Therof*. Over the decades he wrote several additional popular books on Franklin and other early American scientists, including his 1995 publication *Science and the Founding Fathers, Science in the Political Thought of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams and Madison*. In addition to numerous other achievements, Cohen was a founding member of the History of Science Society. In conjunction with HSS's annual meeting, a second memorial service honoring I. Bernard Cohen's life will be held on November 19, 2003, at the Memorial Chapel of Harvard University.



Richard Miles, a long-time Friend of Franklin, and former Professor of History at Wayne State University died on July 1, 2003 at the age of 82. His life was captured in an obituary in the *Detroit Free Press* on July 11, 2003. A native of Michigan, he traveled widely, first as a member of the US Air Force during World War II, as a Fulbright Professor to Madras University in India in 1959 and later for pleasure. He taught in the history department at Wayne State University for nearly 40 years where his area of specialty was early American history. He wrote both articles and book reviews and served as a member of the Board of the Wayne State University Press. After his retirement from Wayne State University in 1987 he continued to help others understand America's past, giving seminars for foreign executives working for American corporations.



We are sad to tell you that **Doctor Frank Robinson** died suddenly Saturday, August 30th. The funeral was private and a memorial service is being planned.

Frank Robinson was President of The Connecticut Academy of Art and Sciences from 1995 through 2002 and steered the Academy through its bicentennial celebration with skillful enthusiasm. He was significantly instrumental in bringing to publication in the fall of this year, *The Voices of the New Republic* as volumes 26 and 27 of the Academy publication *Memoirs*, the culmination of the Academy's first project begun in 1800.

He will be sorely missed.

Special Thanks to Our Life Members!

William D. Anderson, Jr.
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Suwa-Gun Nagano-Ken, Japan

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Tokyo, Japan

George Franklin Waters
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Batavia, IL

Ehsan Zayan
London, UK

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The Friends of Franklin Organization is seeking speakers on Franklin and various aspects of his life. If you are interested in sharing your research with other members of the Friends please contact Kathy DeLuca at 856.979.1613

Visit the
Friends of Franklin website:
www.benfranklin2006.org

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Life Members	\$1,000	Sustaining Friend	\$100
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